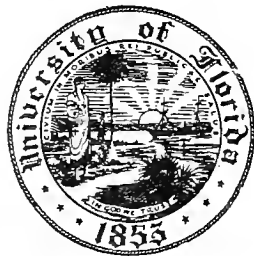




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# Circus Doctor



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*Photo by Dick Miller*

*Playing like Cats and Dogs*

Dr. Henderson with three black panthers and a spotted leopard who haven't yet learned to be afraid

# Circus Doctor

by J. Y. HENDERSON D.V.M.

*Chief Veterinarian of the*

*Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus*

As told to *RICHARD TAPLINGER*

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

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*To Sweetheart and Sonya, to Benny V and Ruth,  
to Champion and Rossia and Astral Princess, and  
to all my other friends and patients, this book  
is affectionately dedicated*



If you pick up a starving dog and make him prosperous, he will not bite you. This is the principal difference between a dog and a man.

— MARK TWAIN



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# Circus Doctor





## CHAPTER I    Want a Job?

THE TELEPHONE SHRILLED with the prolonged insistence which is usually associated with a long-distance call. Struggling out of bed half-groggy with Louisiana heat and nervous exhaustion, I found my way to the living room, fumbled for the light and lifted the cool receiver.

"Is this Dr. J. Y. Henderson?" a feminine voice asked.

"Yes," I said, "this is J. Y. Henderson." I was actually just that, named for a J. Y. Miller whose first name my father apparently never used in any other form: plain J. Y.

"Just one moment, sir, Florida calling. . . . *Ready with Shreveport. Here is your party, Sarasota.*"

A man's voice came on.

"Doc Henderson?"

"Yes?"

"My name is North — Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus. How would you like to come to work for us? You'll be in charge of all our animals — seven hundred of them. We need a good man and you've been recommended."

Maybe a full minute passed. Long mental excursions are not run on timetables. . . .

"Doc Henderson?" the voice repeated patiently. "This is John Ringling North. Can you hear me?"

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Of course, I knew of John Ringling North. I never missed his circus whenever it came.

"I'm sorry," I apologized. "Your call got me out of bed. I thought someone might be practical-joking."

"I was never more serious in my life. We have just lost our veterinarian; we need a man to replace him. I've been talking to my friends the Klebergs of King Ranch, and the veterinarian, Dr. J. K. Northway. They both recommended you very highly. . . ."

Both were old friends. This was, then, a real and tremendous proposition.

"The job is this. You know our magnificent and valuable collection of domestic and wild animals, finest in the world. Horses, wildcats, bears, elephants, zebras, giraffes, antelope lions, tigers, mules, buffalo — everything you can think of and a lot you've never heard of. They need the best care that is medically possible, and we want you to see that they get it."

"Well," I said, "it's an interesting offer. . . . I'd like to think about it. . . . Could you let me have a month to make up my mind?"

"Right," said Mr. North. "You think it over. Remember you'll be the envy of every veterinarian in the country. I expect to hear from you in exactly one month. Good-by."

That was John Ringling North — precise, sudden, and also a little unpredictable.

This unexpected event knocked me off balance for a little while. It always takes me time to make up my mind about new propositions. I like to chew them over, roll them around

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in my mind — the way a new kind of food is mulled on the palate. But paradoxically, when I finally do arrive at a decision, it seems usually made on the basis of instinct rather than as the result of all my reasoning. (There's a good chance, though, that "instinct" may be based on subconscious awareness of cold, hard facts.)

So there I stood, in the sweltering humidity of that Louisiana September night, in the year 1941, while ambition and caution, the conventional future and my adventurous boyhood dreams, waged fierce and total war inside my brain.

Circus life — it promised to be richly colorful and exciting in a lot of ways; also, probably, rigorous and uncomfortable. The pay for this job would be good. But the thought that was most absorbing was that of the animal patients: lions . . . tigers . . . elephants . . . Quite a change for me!

My father was a small rancher in Kerrville, Texas, about seventy-five miles out of San Antonio. I grew up in the midst of horses, cattle, goats, pigs and chickens, and when two years old I used to sit in Papa's saddle with him while he rode the range. At five, I was riding on my own donkey all over the countryside, and on horses occasionally, too; and when I was ten Papa finally trusted me with my own horse. My three brothers handled animals well too, but I was apparently the only one who inherited Papa's love for them all.

When I had nothing else to do, I would always be with our animals — watching them, grooming them, playing with them, and, when old enough, working them.

Papa was particularly fond of horses, and so was I. He

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was a meticulous rider; by the time I was ten he had trained me to be an able, good horseman. He never tolerated careless and sloppy riding, not because he wanted to make showmen out of his sons, but because he had too much respect for the horses.

Once, when Papa and I were riding the range, I got about a hundred yards ahead of him. My legs were aching and tired — as they frequently were, because he insisted we ride erect with the legs tight, back relaxed but straight as a rod.

“When you slouch in the saddle,” he would say, “you are off balance and you are hard on the horse. Sit straight and spare your horse.”

For a kid of ten, this is tiring. So once well out of my father's sight, I took my right leg out of the stirrup and tossed it over the saddle horn in a relaxed position. Then Papa came galloping up and ordered me off my horse.

“Now, son,” he said, “lead the horse back home.” This was a little matter of five miles; it made an adequate impression. Never since then have I ridden a horse off balance.

As each child was born, Papa gave him a heifer, for his very own, and as soon as we were old enough we had to take complete care of our cow. My father supplied feed, pasture, barn space and use of his bulls. The cow remained our property and any heifers born remained the property of the boy whose cow had bred. Papa took all the bull calves. We never thought of the cattle as commercial enterprises, however they were more like pets.

Our little one-room village school, I now realize, was something which today in a big city would be called “an experiment in practical progressive education.” We didn't

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know then about such things. To us, it was just school. But some thirty-six years ago, in this country one-room school, besides learning to read and write and where Dallas, Chicago and London were located on a map, we were trained to take care of our fathers' farms.

We were taught about animals — not out of a textbook: by the animals themselves. Each child would be assigned one from his father's stock. He would be told to go home and take a sheep, goat, or cow, or whatever the family could be persuaded to let him have, to feed the animal and to give it every attention it needed. At the end of each year, we had a sort of miniature county fair at the little school. Each of us would bring in the animal we had cared for, and ribbons were awarded for those in the best condition.

This didn't seem particularly startling or modern at the time, but from what I have seen and read about big city schools I suspect that some of America's rural schools have been teaching them their ways of "progressive education."

Goats are part of my earliest recollection. When I was just about three, and Papa didn't have his own ranch yet, we were living with Mother's folks; here he borrowed enough to invest in goats. Every cent he had went on those animals, whose mohair was a valuable crop; but at first he couldn't even afford a shed to shelter them.

In Texas hills the temperature may be seventy degrees and within a few minutes drop to forty, so that every farmer has to be particularly careful when he shears his goats lest they freeze to death if that cold or rainy spell comes up. When Papa had first shorn his animals and sold the wool,

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within two hours the wind shifted; the day turned bitter blustery cold and rainy. All the adults in the family madly set to, carrying every piece of furniture out of the house, and taking all the goats and herding them inside. There we all stayed for the night until it turned warm again — nobody there except us goats.

As I grew older, one of my jobs was to ride the fence line. Goats are far from being the brightest animals in the world and their favorite habit is to stick their heads through the wide mesh of a fence in an effort to graze on the other side. There was never the slightest bit of difference in the grass on either side of our fence, but to the goat as to the human the distance always looks greener. Then of course their horns tangled them and they were stuck; lest this be permanent, it was necessary to “ride the fence” continually or the animals would have simply starved to death in self-imposed pillories.

Besides this, goats are uncannily surefooted and have the remarkable knack of being able to jump down tremendous distances to land in very small areas without hurting themselves — and yet they don't, unfortunately, have the ability to jump back up again.

And so we boys would go out. I, being the lightest, would be lowered down a cliff by a rope. My job was to put another rope around the goat, then my brothers would hoist both of us.

So life went on till I was eighteen and wrote to Texas Agricultural and Mechanical College for the veterinary school prospectus — and was so intimidated by it that I actually enrolled in the engineering course! But it didn't

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take me long to find my way back to animals, and I entered college with a good practical knowledge of them . . . which was fortunate in another way, too. By the time I entered, Depression had arrived and Papa's moderate prosperity disappeared around the corner, with that of so many other hard-working citizens. He had always boasted that he could never go broke because he never had enough to go broke with; however, these things are relative, and now the simple fact was there wasn't any money to pay my tuition.

But I had one thing to sell: knowledge of horses. I rode as an amateur, showing horses in the amateur class all over the state on week ends, and training and riding horses for the college; and at last I made enough to pay my way through the veterinary school.

When John Ringling North made me his offer to travel with the circus, I was in practice with Dr. A. V. Young in Shreveport, Louisiana. We had worked into an interesting and diversified practice, and had achieved a comfortable setup. Dr. Young is one of the best veterinary surgeons in the country, so I was enjoying instructive work with him.

Our practice was divided into two parts.

We had a typical small-animal hospital in which we took care of the dogs and the cats of the nonfarming or urban population; and we had a large farm practice, which was by far the most interesting part of our work, although likely to haul us out of bed at all hours of the night and in all kinds of weather.

Dr. Young and I equally divided the hardships and easy jobs. We took turns at both the hospital work and the farm

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calls. This kept us from getting bored. It also enabled one of us to get rested up doing hospital duty after spending the previous night racing around on farm calls.

About two months before North's call, a terrible anthrax epidemic had broken out among all the animals on the surrounding farms. This deadly disease, often fatal to animals and humans, strikes with the suddenness of lightning. Animals die almost before they can be treated; humans catch through direct contact with infected animals.

When an epidemic broke out in those days, it was almost impossible to do anything for the infected animals; the healthy must be vaccinated at once if they were to be saved. Today, penicillin is a successful combatant, but in 1941 this drug was only a rumor to us in the country.

I had only studied about anthrax in school — epidemics fortunately, being rare. But now in the surrounding farms thousands and thousands of animals of all kinds had to be vaccinated practically at once. Dr. Young and I, and also Dr. Young's brother Pete, who was associated with us, had worked twenty-four hours a day. When one of us got too exhausted to go on we would grab an hour's sleep when we could and where we could, then continue the effort to get at as many animals as possible.

When the epidemic had first hit and we could only suspect it might be anthrax, I had performed a post-mortem on the first anthrax-suspected cow to die. As I pulled her spleen out it hit my left arm, leaving a red slimy splotch just where I had an open cut. This insured my getting infected. Despite the fact that I happen to be allergic to any horse serum I had to undergo inoculation against anthrax, and I took



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to it so badly that for a while I thought I was going to die.

The past two months I had spent trying to fight the effects of that anthrax inoculation, yet growing more and more run-down from the resulting desultory appetite and debilitating insomnia. By the time that September evening rolled around, I was probably at the lowest ebb of my life. I was physically and nervously depleted, and suffering from the moodiness and discouragement that only complete exhaustion can bring.

Now, as I sat in my living room in the dark after that telephone call, smoking cigarette after cigarette, these episodes of my life wandered around in my mind. I've always felt the future can only be built on what has gone before: how did my sort of life lead to . . . a circus?

Suddenly I remembered a story Mother liked to tell. When I was ten and returning from my first circus, I very proudly announced to the family: "I am going to be a veterinarian when I grow up, and I am going to work for Ringling Brothers Circus."

So here was my chance to fulfill a childhood dream. How many of us ever have that opportunity?

Still, I had doubts. It had taken me many years to learn my preference for the company of animals to that of people. But surely circus people would be mighty different from folks around Texas and Louisiana? I knew nothing about living conditions in the circus, except that animals traveled in cattle cars. The doctor probably traveled with them? . . . Where would I sleep — in a tent or boxcar? What would I

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eat — badly prepared food or mostly sandwiches? . . . It was an unknown world to me, difficult to imagine.

I could manage the horses, all right; but I knew absolutely nothing about the handling, diseases, or treatment of the wild and semiwild animals the circus carried. As far as I had learned, no one knew too much about them; so besides the life, the actual job was a mystery.

Well, I thought, another doctor might just take his chances on their living or dying if his limited knowledge couldn't help. But I like animals too much to make myself responsible for them without knowing I can give them really adequate care.

I decided to find out as much as I could about how wild animals are treated before making up my mind. There was one month in which to investigate.

Between visits to the library I made countless telephone calls to Dr. J. K. Northway, chief veterinarian of the King Ranch, whom I knew of old.

At the end of that allotted month I had discovered two interesting facts:

Not very much indeed was known about treating sick wild animals, mostly because no one had garnered any experience; wild beasts were usually restrained for treatment when injured, but were seldom watched for disease they were subject to.

The second thing I learned from Dr. Northway was that the circus's biggest preoccupation was with its horses: Ringling Brothers had a fortune tied up in what was undoubtedly the most beautiful collection of horses in the world. They

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wanted everything possible done for the rest of their animals too, but experience had taught them that they couldn't expect that to be too much.

At this time certain drugs like the sulfa group had just come on the market and there were other drugs like penicillin which were not then ready for use, but which were in their last stages of experiment. Reading about these experiments, it dawned on me now that I might be in a position to pioneer in the wild animal field. Perhaps I could develop a practical means of adapting these drugs to the care of wild animals. . . .

*There was a challenge; it excited me.*

I began now to be influenced by that magic which the very idea of a circus holds for all of us. When we are young, very young, we dream consciously of slipping off our family shackles and running away into that seemingly wild gypsy life. When we are older we conform to our own life as it is — we adjust ourselves to our daily grind, interesting or dull as it may be. We consciously spurn circus dreams; but still — we may escape to them at times. This running away, this dream of adventure, wasn't the determining factor for me, but it would be something less than honest if I didn't admit that it was certainly a consideration.

So at last, exactly one month after Mr. North had phoned me, I wrote to accept the job; and the next day a telegram arrived, asking me to report immediately to the Ringling Brothers—Barnum & Bailey winter quarters, in Sarasota, Florida.

## CHAPTER II Meet the Patients

A PARTICULARLY IGNOMINIOUS prize-ring defeat had recently immortalized the expression, "I should of stood in bed."

So now as my train sped eastward towards Sarasota, through calendar-like Southern landscapes, the wheels seemed to click along to nervous reiteration: *I should of stood in bed. . . . I should . . . of stood . . . in bed. . . .*

To the vision of seven hundred wild animals hungrily licking their chops I shudderingly got off at Sarasota.

Bustling streets, colorful with palm trees and tropical shrubbery . . . a DRIVE IT YOURSELF sign. With a car soon rented and directions obtained, I drove through the city, past white imposing buildings, then shabbier, smaller structures, then stretches of open country. Deep inside, I was recalling the small boy I used to be, and that first trip to the dentist.

A huge billboard ahead . . .

RINGLING BROTHERS

BARNUM & BAILEY

The Greatest Show on Earth

(*Turn left here*)

## MEET THE PATIENTS

. . . Handsomely decorated with roaring lions, great mouths filled with long, sharp, hungry fangs . . .

I turned left.

Almost immediately I came to the Main Gate.

Nearby ran a single section of track on which stood an ancient railroad car — *Office of the Greatest Show on Earth*. Up the wooden steps and through the door . . . Two men in T-shirts and stained slacks, bent in concentration over a littered desk . . .

“Where can I find Mr. North?” I asked, with what I hoped was a brisk, cheerful tone.

A young boy sitting at the desk nearest me looked up for a moment and then went on with his writing.

“He ain’t here.”

“He’s expecting me. My name is Henderson.”

His head jerked up.

“Doc Henderson? The new vet? Come with me,” he said, studying me with unguarded curiosity as he rose.

I followed him across a small field to a big stone barn-shaped building. This, obviously, was the electrical shop. Stacked on the floor were the giant spotlights and floodlights, the diesel engines, all the equipment the show carries with it to produce its own power. Hanging from pegs and beams from the ceiling were the miles of cable and cords and wiring which supply this city on wheels with its electric light.

We picked our way through the cavernous main room to a little door in a far corner. An adjoining smaller room was lined around all four walls with tables, work benches and a fantastic array of machine-shop equipment.

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A small group of comfortably dressed men were in casual conference. One of them was smoking a cigarette in a holder. He looked up.

“Doc Henderson?” he said.

“Yessir,” I answered.

“I’m Henry Ringling North,” he smiled. “Welcome to the show. Hope you like it here — my brother has told me all about you.” His voice became brisker. “Now let’s get going. I’ll show you your patients.”

Just like that. No preliminaries; no wasted time. Sick animals are waiting.

As we walked outside of the electrical shop, Mr. North paused.

“This is it,” he said, proudly swinging his arm in a complete arc.

Pointing straight ahead almost as far as one could see, he indicated a large, square, brick building. “That’s our machine shop,” he said. “That is where we build and repair everything we use here or when we are on the road. We even build our own specially designed railroad cars . . . everything but the axles and wheels.”

“Wouldn’t it be easier to use reconditioned standard box-cars and coaches?” I naïvely asked.

“And how would you fit a giraffe into a standard boxcar?” he demanded.

I scratched my head over that puzzler, my first stupefying realization of the enormity and the complexity of the manifold problems that were daily fare to the whole circus organization. I should doubtless have to digest some of my own; but first I must learn what they were.

## MEET THE PATIENTS

Mr. North's arm swung gradually to the right. Where he pointed, off in the distance, I saw a large arena, about the size of the big top. It had a ring for horse and elephant acts, and a large grass area for acrobats, spectacles and miscellaneous performances. On the far side of it was an old grandstand similar to the kind found in any neighborhood ball park.

"That's where we give our Sunday shows for the tourists, and where all our acts do their rehearsing when we're here in winter quarters," Mr. North explained.

Then he toured me through all the buildings scattered over the endless acres of the lot. In the monkey house I met Gargantua and M'Toto lolling but still glowering fiercely in their air-conditioned cages. The Diana and rhesus monkeys were familiar to me by name at least; others I'd never even heard of before.

Outside was an island, where the monkeys play in good weather, surrounded by a shallow moat in which Betty Lou, a pygmy hippopotamus, reigned supreme — a cherished personality of the circus family. She had been given to the Norths by Harvey Firestone some time before, and had developed a charming trick of begging all passing circus hands for chocolate, one tiny piece of which would keep her great jaws chomping for half an hour. Watching her now as she was rolling and grinding the little square of chocolate North had tossed her way, I fervently hoped every ounce of Betty Lou would remain nice and healthy for the rest of her days.

We entered the menagerie through the big double doors. Along one side was a long row of cages and on the opposite

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side, piled in orderly stacks, and even hanging from the ceiling, were tremendous rolls of canvas. Some canvas was new, and some old and repaired, a reminder to all that these sturdy buildings were but a wayside rest on a long, long trip.

Overhead was a network of electric wires that buzzed briefly as flies efficiently electrocuted themselves.

We progressed slowly from cage to cage. Mr. North gave me the individual name of each animal and its interesting characteristics. I was avidly reading the labels on each cage and wondering how I'd learn to pronounce them.

There was a hyena in the first cage, then two male lions; next to them a leopard, next a jaguar, then a cage with two wildcats; following that, several cages of bears. Zoo-fashion, each cage had a swinging door leading to an outdoor cage which was used in good weather.

Seven hundred animals in the circus and each one had a species and a name!

We stopped in front of a huge black bear, sluggishly lolling in a corner of the cage. I looked at him. He looked at me.

"Looks like you have a patient already, Doc," North stated. "Jim is rather mean," he warned — then, fortunately, added, "I wouldn't examine him right now if I were you, but he's sick. Just on a quick look what do you think is wrong?"

This was the first time I'd been at closer range to a bear than, perhaps, fifty yards. At first glance he had seemed like any sleepy bear and I vaguely remembered hearing something about how bears hibernate. Now I studied his eyes. They seemed unusually yellow, and, as he opened his mouth, I noticed more undue yellow around the gums.



## MEET THE PATIENTS

Under pressure from my new boss a strange thing now happened. Suddenly, the bear was no longer a bear. He was a dog. He was one of the many dogs who had crouched miserably on my old examining table back home in Shreveport. This old hound, I was thinking, has some kind of liver complaint.

Notching my thumbs in my belt and settling back on my heels I turned to the boss and said, "I think this bear has something seriously wrong with his liver."

"Liver?" He was obviously surprised.

"That's what I think without examining him," I said, "but I'd like to look him over."

"Well, let it go until tomorrow." Something warned me not to let it go at that, but North seemed final about it.

"Now for the elephant kraal!" Plainly, North enjoyed showing off his domain. When we were passing the refreshment stand, he hailed a dignified gentleman of medium build.

"Here is someone you will want to know right away," he told me. "Mr. Court, Doc Henderson. Doc, here, is our new vet. You've probably heard of Alfred Court, Doc." Indeed, I didn't have to listen to the rest of the introduction: "Mr. Court is called the greatest trainer of wild animals of all time."

This was the biggest thrill I'd had in years. Since I was a kid I'd known his name and had seen him do one of the most difficult acts that can be performed with wild animals — the "mixed group." I have seen Court put through their paces lions, leopards, panthers, tigers, jaguars, polar bears, and great Danes in one cage at the same time. Exactly how difficult it is to train and control a cageful of natural enemies

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took me years of experience with the circus to learn. But, even on my first day there, I knew that it was the peak of daring and efficiency in wild animal training.

"I hope you won't let all these new animals scare you," Court said kindly.

"I'm not exactly scared," I parried, "but . . ."

"I know," he laughed. "You can't imagine ever touching them, ever coming near them, let alone having to treat them. Well, don't worry."

"I'd like to think my care of them was for their own good."

"I'll be glad to be of any help," he promised. "Call on me. As far as the cats and bears go, I not only can help you by telling you about their characteristics, but I know each individual animal pretty well. I have to, in my business. We are pretty friendly, you know."

This amused me — at the time. It seemed impossible to me that any human could be even remotely friendly with, for instance, a jaguar. An animal might obey him for any of a dozen reasons, but friendship was out of the question.

"I am sure I will be around to call on you soon," I called back as we wandered on towards the elephant kraal.

An elephant, as he stands lazily scooping hay up with his trunk and tossing it precisely into his mouth, looks gentle. I knew they were intelligent. But as we stood now in the middle of the kraal, the enormous animals surrounding us and looming over us like redwood trees, it was impossible to avoid the implications of their pink, mean little eyes.

I was relieved to see the lethal tusks had been removed — until a thought came: whose job would it be to take out those of future elephants?

## MEET THE PATIENTS

Just then a large broad-shouldered man walked over and stuck out his hand.

"I hear you are the new vet," he said.

"This is Walter McClain, Doc Henderson," said North. "Walter McClain is the best elephant man in the business."

"If you ever need any help, just call on me, Doc!" — McClain took up the cheerful refrain — "I know most of these animals pretty well and have a lot of good friends among them."

I was beginning to feel less alone; apparently that ever-possible bogey of resentful and impeding colleagues in a new job was unknown in the circus. So far, everyone had been informal, straight from the shoulder. This would be good, I said to myself; I would need these men and they were making themselves available.

"I might as well show you the trained cats while we are about it," North reminded himself. "They chew each other up quite a bit and they will be probably your most frequent and certainly your most important patients."

He led me through the "cat barn" with its scientific indoor and outdoor cages. We came to the outdoor cat-training area. There I was startled by the spectacle of a bare-chested, bronze-skinned man standing in the affectionate embrace of a full-grown leopard. We watched as he played with the animal as one would with a puppy. He called her "Sonya" and spoke his commands in a broad, but highly cultured, accent. When the leopard was safely returned to her cage, North beckoned this Hindu trainer over to us. His powerful build and perfect proportions had deceived me; I was surprised now to find him almost a head shorter than I.

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"Mr. Dhotre," said North, "this is Doc Henderson."

Tremendous force of personality was evident in his face. Then, when he smiled in greeting, it was as though all the lights were suddenly switched on in a darkened house. His were the whitest teeth I have ever seen.

I was to become very friendly with Damoo Dhotre, one of the most extraordinary combinations of personality I have ever seen in a human being. Damoo had been training animals since he was thirteen years old, which gave him at this time something more than twenty-five years as an animal trainer. He was strong and muscular. He combined the qualities of the physical daredevil and the Hindu philosopher and mystic. He studied his animals thoroughly and he knew them theoretically as well as personally. Damoo was a person who never offered advice but who, when asked, would pour forth a bottomless store of practical help. ("But, I will tell you something," he would say: "I believe that every time anyone gets hurt by a wild animal it is his own fault. That goes for trainers, too.")

"What about doctoring these animals?" I asked him now. "Do they require very much?"

"Oh yes," he said, "mainly because they fight so much. When you put different kinds of animals — natural enemies — in the ring, they fight. All the time they fight — and they get hurt. Sometimes badly."

"Is doctoring them as big a problem as I imagine?" I asked.

"No," he said, "you call me when you have anything to do on my animals and I promise to keep them quiet for you." And then he added what I had half-expected. "It will be

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difficult for you in the beginning, but it isn't for me because the animals know me. We are friends."

I was to learn that friendship with wild animals was not a myth and I was to find out, too, that man had to make the overtures. He first had to know his animal thoroughly; friendship would appear in return for this understanding. But I was also to discover that a wild animal is always wild and can never be completely trusted.

As we left the cat barn my spirits mounted, for I saw a row of low, familiar-looking buildings; out of each window stuck a horse's head. We walked through an opening in the wall of horses' heads to the middle of the main horse corral. On three sides of us there were open stalls, and on the fourth were box stalls where the most favored horses were kept. In the immediate center of the corral were patches of grass decorated with palm trees and a large watering trough.

I felt that the entrance to the corral would justify plagiarism in an inscription: *Through these portals pass the most beautiful horses in the world.*

I examined the broad-beamed Percherons, smaller neat hackneys, smart American saddle horses, wild Arabians, the standard-bred horses, stockinged Clydesdales, and Andalusians. All breeds were represented, and these were the best of each breed. Along the far end were the ponies. In all, the show carried about two hundred horses — divided between this corral and the lower corral across from the cat barn — and all in A-1 condition.

The horse doctoring was to present many problems, but

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here I was thoroughly at home. This I looked forward to with keen anticipation.

So there were my patients. I remembered my boyhood, sitting in the grandstand, watching similar circus animals who all seemed so bright, so amenable, so pettable. Usually, a place, person or scene which has loomed large to a child shrinks in size when re-seen after a long absence by the grown adult. Not so with these — except for the horses, they were *twice* as large as I recalled. What's more, some had snarled, some had shown their teeth; worse still, most simply stood with heads down and shrewd eyes fixed on me.

Through an archway of the horse corral, Mr. North indicated a small white shed, which, on one side, had a little horse corral of its own.

“That one is all yours, Doc,” he said. I read the sign on its door: *Veterinary Department*. Suddenly, I was no longer the fascinated visitor, but a blooded member of the circus family: not only a Doc, but a whole department.

It seemed as though trumpets should blare me across my new threshold, but the only blare I heard came from the snores of a boy sleeping on a cot in the far corner. This boy, once awakened, was introduced as my assistant.

The room was roughly furnished and equipped. The walls were whitewashed, but previous hospitals had left a heavy odor of dung. (An animal hospital must be built for efficiency, and to a necessary extent must be sterile and clean, but it in no way resembles the sparkling tile and chrome considered vital in human hospitals.)

## MEET THE PATIENTS

Hung from my new walls was a variety of equipment. There was also an inner room to serve as a laboratory, dominated by an operating table and lined with supply shelves on all sides. The table, a metal affair eight feet by three, and thirty inches high, had none of the trimmings usually found in humans' hospitals. It was a work table with wheels, made to the size of the largest patients.

North left me there with a final admonition.

"You know, Doc," he said, "our previous vets haven't given much time to the wild animals. They have done what little they could for them and that is all I have expected. You were hired because you are considered one of the best horse doctors in the country."

When Mr. North had left, I looked over the laboratory to see what equipment and what medicines were there, and what would be needed. Remembering his last remark, I was nevertheless still determined that, difficult or not, those wild animals would also be doctored.

The next morning North was on the job even before I checked in. He called me into his office.

"Doc," he said, "Jim, the black bear, died last night. I didn't think he was as sick as all that or I would have used you."

"I am sorry to hear that, Mr. North. I really should have examined him yesterday. Do you mind if I perform a post-mortem?"

"I wish you would."

The animal was brought to my operating table, where North stayed to watch. I opened the bear and cut straight for

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the liver. And there, sure enough, growing right on top of it, was a tremendous tumor.

“Nice guess, Doc.”

I couldn't restrain a grin. If a knowledge of dogs and cats and horses and pigs could really be transferred to their wild counterparts so easily, then maybe I *was* going to be able to keep these seven hundred wild animals in pretty good physical condition.

Before the day was out, North invited me into one of the streamlined railroad cars, took a key out of his pocket and opened the door.

“This will be your stateroom on the road,” he told me — and when my surprise must have showed: “How did you think you were going to travel — cattle car?”

I laughed embarrassedly, probably making it very obvious that that was exactly my thought.

“We do have a cattle car for you,” he added, “in case you have a very sick animal who needs sitting up with on the road.”

He described to me what was to serve for years as my hospital car. It was a car with just blank stalls in it — good-sized stalls, with equipment to keep animals from falling from train motion or illness — and sleeping quarters for me or one of my assistants at the far end.

“That is for you when you want to use it or need to use it,” North said; “otherwise, this stateroom is where you live.”

It proved more than comfortable living. Pullman travel even at its best could never be as homey as I was to find that circus setup.



## CHAPTER III Starting – with a Roar

IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN the Florida climate; it could have been the vigorous routine of life in the circus; or perhaps the complete change of every detail of my way of living effected the cure. Not being an animal, I don't pretend to be able to diagnose for myself. The fact remains that the next four months, which comprised the busiest period of my life, kept me so occupied that I completely forgot about my illness due to the anthrax injection.

From early morning until late at night, and frequently all night long, I was on the circus grounds. This was not because of love of hard work or long hours – I hadn't been away from Texas long enough for that. I was plunged headlong into an overpowering job; I wanted to learn about it very rapidly, and I was learning that for me there was a lot to learn.

For instance, once I pointed my finger – “What is that little animal there?”

The menagerie superintendent looked over and laughed.

“A cinnamon bear – and they aren't so little. *That* happens to be a baby.”

I laughed too, but until then I had thought vaguely that bears came in two varieties – bears, and polar bears. Our circus owned five different kinds.

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The show had just come into winter quarters: for the next four months all would first rest; then the performers would start practicing new tricks and in many cases new acts; then for about a month the entire group, together with new imports, would be co-ordinated into a finished performance for the road.

Although now there was no daily packing and unpacking, and while having all the animals permanently housed for the period was an advantage, life was busy and sometimes hectic.

There were new performers coming in, from all parts of the world, many unable to talk in English. They brought performing animals which were frequently irritable and weak with vomiting because of the ocean trip, and nervous because of their new surroundings. Animals, I have found, are particularly sensitive to their neighbors. Put one next to a different animal from the one he is used to, and you are likely to have trouble. I had known this to be true of horses and here it was true of practically every other animal that I came to know.

At 6:30 every morning I reported to the little white building, my hospital. Here I would familiarize myself with my medicines and equipment and add to the list of supplies needed not only for winter quarters but for the road. And here, on my second day, came my first "action."

I was looking over the interior of the hospital, wondering how best to convert one corner into a research laboratory, when a voice outside shouted the call which — though I didn't know it at the time — was to become my trademark:

*"Hey Doc!"*

Many years ago the cry "Hey Rubel!" brought circus hands

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running from all directions. It meant “trouble.” Its modern equivalent “Hey Doc!” brings me running – frequently in all directions. It, too, usually means trouble.

I opened the door and yelled “Hey?” It was John Sabo, the menagerie superintendent.

“Doc, I’ve got a big black bear over there,” he said. “I thought since you were a little foggy about bears you might want to start learning. Nothing very serious, but he has a broken claw and it’s broken all the way up into the flesh. I think it might be infected.”

I drew in my breath but said, “Sure, John, I’ll be there in a minute.” I put some instruments and antiseptics into my bag and started over. This was it. I felt a sort of stage fright, and that feeling stayed with me for a long, long time.

Bears are both unfriendly and very untrustworthy. Trainers and keepers have been mauled and killed by those that for years have acted like trained dogs. Their claws are long and sharp, and they have enormous strength in their multi-purpose arms.

We examined the right forepaw of Arvid, the bear, through the cage; it was evident that he had split it well up into the flesh. He was treading very lightly on that paw. It was already badly infected.

My first impulse was to anesthetize Arvid completely so I could work on him in safety; but anesthetizing an animal will weaken him. The anesthesia itself is a shock to his nervous system and there is a recovery period during which he eats little or nothing. In this case I realized that I could work just as safely, perhaps, without an anesthetic.

We called a couple of boys from the adjoining animal

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houses over to help. I made a lasso out of a long length of rope and after three or four tries managed to slip the noose over Arvid's neck, one of his forepaws sticking through it. (This was necessary because if neither paw had stuck through there was the danger of the noose tightening around his neck.) To accomplish the trick we had to dangle the rope through the bars and tease Arvid with it, and the bear, being a playful animal, instinctively stuck his head and a paw through the loop in a somewhat teasing, somewhat exploratory manner. Then we had him. We tightened the noose, and then all four of us leaned on the rope, pulled him over and held him tightly against the bars of the cage. We then put another rope around the injured paw and two more boys held that paw through the bars so that it couldn't move.

While they held tight I went to work on Arvid.

The operation itself was very simple: a local anesthetic injected into the paw so that the bear wouldn't suffer any pain, and amputation of the two broken toes. Then I made an incision up higher, large enough to drain the infection, and doused the paw with a good strong antiseptic. The cage boy was instructed to sprinkle sulfa on Arvid's paw as often as he could get near him, and the business was over. It wasn't anything to write to one's veterinary school surgery professor about; but as my first operation on a wild animal, it stays in my memory more vividly than any I have performed since. And for years, whenever I had stage fright over work on a bear, John Sabo would remind me I'd had my "Arvid education."

\* \* \*

## STARTING – WITH A ROAR

My next contact with the bear family happened just two days later, and that also made a lasting impression on me.

A trainer had arrived in winter quarters from Germany with twelve trained polar bears. He came running over to my hospital on this particular morning, and I gathered from his screams that he was giving me the German equivalent of “Hey Doc!” I followed him, wildly guessing at what equipment to take with me.

In the cage one of his polar bears was in the midst of terrible convulsions. It struck me – judging again by my dog experiences – that this looked very much like a case of worms. It didn’t seem too likely, because these trained animals are nursed like babies by their trainers and are watched twenty-four hours a day by either the trainer or the cage boy. Their diet, too, is carefully regulated. Nevertheless, it did look like worms.

We had the other bears run out of the cage quickly and the trainer and I gave the bear a shot of a sedative. A test proved that my diagnosis was correct and I wormed him immediately. In due time that one bear relieved himself of over half a gallon of long white worms.

I figured that this must be a weakness of polar bears if it could happen to them under such close surveillance, so next I gave the other bears the same treatment: a dose of tetrachlorethylene to drug the worms, followed an hour later by a strong purgative. (Without the latter the bear might die of the worm poison or else the worms might come to, hungrier and peppier than ever.) Every one of these bears yielded at least a half-gallon of worms. In all my subsequent experiences

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with sick bears, particularly polar bears, I always suspect worms first.

I jotted in my notebook: *Whenever a new bear joins the show introduce yourself to him with a test for worms. He may need a good, stiff worming.*

The first of hundreds of routines had started.

Since there is no time for hesitation or research when an animal may be dying, it was encouraging to me to find, time and again, a point of reference in my former practice that helped with wild animals.

As I was walking back to the hospital that day a question came — Was it a little foolish to walk into a bear's cage even though pretty sure he was too sick and too weak to be dangerous? Evidently he had accepted my manner. A veterinarian very seldom considers his a dangerous profession, and yet even with domestic animals there is danger: a horse can kick a man's head off with one swift kick, and a bull can be at least as dangerous as any animal known. However, you simply learn the animal's characteristics and then you can calmly and intelligently protect yourself. It would seem that the way to get along with wild animals is the way you treat domestic animals: fear none but respect all.

Notes I made that day were useful; but there are still unexpected mischances. Sometimes a bear will show no symptoms of worms until it is too late to help him, and a handsome menagerie polar bear died thus quite recently despite all our precautions.

He had refused food the previous day, and this day as he swallowed his first bite of food he went into convulsions and

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was dead before I could get to his cage. Because his manner of dying made me suspect strychnine poisoning, I started to perform a post-mortum on him in the cage. When I cut him open I noticed that the intestine just below the stomach was as hard as wood. As I plunged the knife into it, the wall burst and worms sprayed into the air like water from a fire hose.

Apparently the worms, starved from the previous day, had hit the upper intestine like a crowd of homeward-bound New Yorkers raiding the BMT on a rainy night. Packed in just as tightly, they paralyzed the bear's intestines. Bears, you see, are more vulnerable than subways.

The hospital needed straightening up; supplies needed ordering; I had to get acquainted with personnel and animals and all their various routines; and at the same time things kept happening. One never knew what was coming next. (That is a situation, I might say, that hasn't changed to this day. A one-armed paperhanger is a slouch compared to a two-armed circus veterinarian.)

One noon during my first week I stopped at the horse corral for a routine check on two horses with colic, to make sure that the grooms were carrying out instructions. (I never permit a horse with colic to be left alone; there is a chance of his lying down, and frequently he will toss around so that an intestine will loop around another, causing what is known as "twisted gut." When the gas hits the obstruction, the intestine ruptures. After medicating a horse I insist that the groom walk him, for hours if necessary, until the gas leaves his system.)

While working on a horse I happened to glance out the

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window and saw that Alfred Court was bringing his animals into the big outdoor cage for rehearsal. I hadn't had time yet to see that act, so now I watched, while he brought his animals in, directed each one to a pedestal, and then smoothly and apparently effortlessly put them through their very difficult paces.

He was almost finished when he turned his back for a moment to get a piece of meat as a reward for a leopard. As he did, a tiger sitting on a pedestal just left of a big male lion struck at the lion with his paw. It might have been in play, or it might have been in anger; mixed groups present these mishaps.

The tiger's paw grazed the lion and the latter, startled, in an instinctive pull-back motion lost his balance and fell. As he did his jaw hit the steel pedestal and he landed on the ground in a heap. Then he arose and climbed back on his pedestal.

Court took one look at the lion and immediately drove the other animals through the chute back into their cages. He called me over.

"Look at this, Doc, will you?" he said.

I walked to the bars of the cage and looked in at the lion. I nodded my head. I saw what Court meant: the jaw was definitely broken.

"What do you think?" Court said.

"I don't know," I answered. "Have you ever heard of an operation to mend a lion's jaw?"

"No, but he is a beautiful animal," said Court. "Do you think there is a chance?"

"There is always a chance," I said. "Are you willing to have



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me experiment?" Court's head gave one brief nod and he drove the animal through the chute back into his cage. The lion stretched out in a corner, his eyes warily following every motion Court made.

I hurried over to my hospital building to get everything ready; then I filled my hypodermic syringe with a supply of Nembutal and went back to the cat barn.

Similar operations had been performed on dogs, and I wondered whether the lion's nature would permit an exact imitation.

A squeeze cage was being brought up against the door of the lion's cage. A squeeze cage is small, strong and on wheels. One end is a door, sliding up and down. The two sides are fixed on runners so that by winding a handle they can gradually be closed in toward each other or opened out. The object of the squeeze cage is to hold a wild animal immobile while he is being worked on; to keep him from hurting himself — or his doctor! The ends of the squeeze cage have straight up-and-down bars. The sides have closer bars running in both directions in order to keep the animal from getting his claws through. By bringing this squeeze cage up to the door of the lion's cage and opening both doors it is usually an easy matter to prod him into the squeeze cage. If prodding doesn't work, a small piece of meat placed in the squeeze cage will do the trick. Then the door at the end of the squeeze cage is lowered and the handle wound until the animal is held, not tightly enough to hurt him, but snugly enough so that he won't hurt anyone else. A good precaution is to rope the squeeze cage to the animal's cage before opening the doors.

The first thing I had to do was anesthetize. When the lion

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was safely in the squeeze cage I pricked a vein in his front leg and kept injecting the fluid slowly until he looked drowsy and began going limp. Then the needle was withdrawn and he collapsed on the floor; and from that point on we were out of danger — he would sleep from six to eight hours, I believed.

We moved the cage over to the hospital building, opened it up and slid the lion onto the operating table. I examined his jaw and found that the lower jawbone was broken clean through in two places, leaving the entire center section hanging limp.

When a dog has a broken jaw you wire the broken bones together; you then wire the lower jaw to the upper jaw, tightly, to keep his jaws clenched and completely immobile. Then till the bone knits you feed your dog by dripping milk slowly into the corner of his mouth where the flesh is loose.

With a lion this did not seem such a good idea. First of all, you would have to have men working on two shifts to drip enough milk into the corner of his mouth. Secondly (though numerical sequences may well be reversed), you would have a difficult time finding men who would be willing to stand alongside a sore lion dripping anything into the corner of his mouth. We had to figure out another way.

By considering where we must vary the usual plan, I thought of something that might work. Drilling holes on either side of the two breaks, through the lower jaw just beneath the gum line, and using stiff wire, I laced the center broken section of the jaw to the two outer sections; this would hold the entire lower jawbone solid in one piece to heal, but there was still the problem of keeping the lion from moving this jaw and at the same time allowing him to eat. I took two

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blocks of wood, each about two inches thick. One block fitted between upper and lower molars on each side, leaving room for his tongue between them. More holes were bored to lace wires through the jawbones, top and bottom, his jaws being wired tightly yet separated by those blocks of wood.

This meant that the entire lower jaw was solid in one piece, and both upper and lower jaws were being held firm; but his mouth was permanently open because of those blocks of wood. Because the center section had no wood, he could get his tongue out to lap up milk. The only question that bothered me was whether, for the six or eight weeks it would take the jaw to set, milk would give him the nourishment he needed.

After we had finished working, I sewed him up and wrapped his front feet in heavy cloth bandages to keep him from clawing the wires out of his jaw. Then we put him again into the squeeze cage and wheeled him back to the cat barn and his cage.

The operation had taken three hours. Court and I looked at each other and it was hard to tell which of us was more tired. We had shared the nervous strain and, since he assisted me throughout the operation, our physical labor was equally divided as well. My strain was due to the fact that I wanted this operation to be a success. His was due to the fact that a trainer does become attached to his animals, almost the way a parent does to his children.

The next morning the lion was full of pep and when I came up to his cage he was assiduously lapping up all the milk the boys could put in his cage. After the third day we

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began pulverizing meat and putting it in the milk. We found that he was able to get most of this meat up with his tongue and to swallow it without chewing. He lost some weight, but he came through that operation beautifully and recovered completely.

Six weeks later we anesthetized him again, opened his jaw up and removed the wire. The jaw had knit perfectly, the bone was smooth and straight and hard, and we had a completely healthy lion who went back into the ring and performed just as well as he ever had before. He lived for years after that; when he finally did die, not so very long ago, it was from old age.

I had hoped that nothing of this sort would turn up quite so soon, but in looking back on it I think perhaps this operation, coming when it did, is the luckiest thing that happened to me during that period. This was no routine treatment. It was something for which there was little if any precedent. If it hadn't worked I don't know how I would have felt. The fact that it was successful gave me an amount of confidence that I needed badly at that time, and which I am sure enabled me to save the lives of countless other animals during the ensuing months.

Alfred Court and I were friends and saw a great deal of each other until he retired quite recently. The friendship dated from this operation. As we worked together, both to the same end, each of us realized — without either of us saying anything — that we were men who were happiest when we were working for and with animals. We weren't misanthropes: our relationships with people were excellent and enjoyable; but we were more at home with animals. When

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there had been a choice in our lives, each of us had always made the decision that kept us close to animals.

There was understanding between us, and although in the course of our long acquaintance we seldom if ever discussed anything of a personal nature and were not intimate friends from that point of view, this bond became constantly stronger.

Just a few days after this operation on Court's lion, I was standing outside the cat barn having my first lengthy chat with Damoo Dhotre. He was wearing a tan T-shirt and brown dungarees and we were just a few yards from the outdoor training ring, both of us leaning against the fence smoking. Damoo was answering a lot of questions that had arisen in my mind as a result of the many hours I had spent watching his animals. I had observed how they did everything, but now I wanted to know why they did it.

While we were talking, I noticed that the cage boys were running some of Damoo's cats from their cages in the cat barn into the chute which connects with the outdoor training ring. There were leopards, panthers, black jaguars, pumas. As each animal was driven forward into the chute, a board was inserted partitioning him off in his own cell.

I had noticed this out of the corner of my eye, and during a break in the conversation, I pointed and said to Damoo, "How come the animals are being put in there?"

"Oh," he said, "it is two o'clock. Time for me to go to work." He snuffed out his cigarette and shook hands with me.

"You will pardon me, please? I must work for a while. I will be free in a half-hour and we can talk some more."

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Whereupon he walked the few yards to the cage, opened the door, swung himself in, latched the door after him and then gave the signal to the cage boys to let the cats into the ring with him.

My first wild animal interest was the big cats — and to this day I think it is the greatest. That may be because they are the most terrifying. Actually, I think my interest is a combination of admiration for their beauty and dignity and the challenge they present to any man, be he trainer, doctor, or cage boy. Visitors to winter quarters by the thousands stand in front of the cages of these animals and almost invariably call them by the wrong name. A man will stand in front of a leopard cage and say to his wife, "Come over here, Mary, and look at these tigers."

It seemed odd to me that this should be so until I remembered that except in our largest cities there are no zoos and the vast majority of our population never has the chance to see wild animals. That accounted, I supposed, for the tremendous popularity of the circus menagerie when the show went on the road. This was the only zoo many people ever saw; and a considerable zoo it was.

As a result of my friendship with Court and Dhotre and my increasing fondness for the cats, I now began to learn more about them than I had ever known before. I talked to the cat men. I read animal books.

The commonly found cats in our zoos and circuses are the lions, tigers, leopards, black panthers, jaguars, black jaguars, and then some of the smaller ones such as ocelots, cougars, wildcats. The differences are rather striking.

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The lion, of course, has long been known as the King of Beasts. I asked Damoo once whether he felt the title justified.

“Yes,” he said, “in my opinion it is. First of all, he looks the part. He looks like a king. He has size; he has dignity; he has what appears to be great pride. Secondly, even though some of the smaller animals can attack faster than he can, the long hair around his neck usually prevents his getting killed by them. I think,” Damoo concluded, “that if there is a king of the jungle, the lion certainly earns the title.”

The lion is one of the few animals that nearly everybody recognizes. It comes from Africa. It is the largest of the cats. The male can usually be identified by the tremendous mane on the back of his head and around his neck. The lion is a little less fierce than people imagine. He is a noisy animal, and noisy animals like noisy people are usually friendly. The lion makes friends easily. He is highly intelligent. He can be taught tricks rather easily if he is caught young. He is a nice animal to have around.

Trainers, however, have been attacked by lions; they have even been killed by them. While I was working on this book, Mae Kovar, whom I knew well when she was an animal trainer for Ringling Brothers, was killed by a lion in California. When a lion attacks he will never spring in one leap and land on you the way some of the other cats will. He is more likely to come in rushes; or he will knock you down with his paw. His claws are long and sharp. His paw is heavy and can easily break a man's back or his neck before the animal pounces on him. The lion is most dangerous when males and females are in the ring together.

It was Damoo who pointed out to me that of all the jungle

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cats, the lion is the only one that travels in prides, or groups. The tigers, the leopards, the panthers, all travel either singly or in pairs. That makes an important difference. In the jungle, when a lioness in the pride comes in heat all the males will fight over her. They will fight until one emerges the victor. He may have left a train of dead, maimed, or simply wounded animals behind. That victorious male and the female go off together many, many miles away in almost complete hiding, and there they have what amounts to a honeymoon. They stay away two or three weeks. Most of that time they neither hunt nor eat, and should any unfortunate animal or man come in their vicinity he is quickly disposed of.

That same jungle instinct doesn't leave a lion because he happens to be driven onto a ship and quartered in a circus many thousands of miles away from home. Wild animals, we have to be reminded, are never tame; they can be trained, with patience, to do certain tricks, but they are still wild in every respect.

In the ring, when a female lion comes into heat the males, as a rule, don't fight only because the trainer has them under control. They have been punished in the past for fighting in the ring and, remembering that punishment, they stay on their pedestals. But they do growl at each other and every instinct urges them to fight. They are extremely nervous. At this time they are very unpleasant; it is at this point that any slight change from the usual, in voice or movement — anything at all unfamiliar that the trainer does — is likely to result in a debacle. Any move that another animal makes can upset one of these lions; repeated, it is likely to drive the lion into a frenzy, at which point he will attack either



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the other animal or perhaps the trainer himself. For that reason many trainers will remove the female from the act during the time she is in heat.

A very good friend of mine, Dick Clemens, was attacked twice in one recent season by a lion at the time a female in the cage was in heat. Once a lion knocked him down and mauled him. The other time, he bit him through the shoulder. At that point the relationship became so strained that Clemens had to take this lion out of his act. Yet in this case the lion was a bottle-fed pet of Clemens's; he had been carefully raised and trained by Dick from the time the animal was a cub. Nevertheless, when jungle instinct comes to the fore even domestic-born lions are blinded to things like loyalty and friendship. He reminded everybody that he was a jungle animal.

Lion acts are sensational because the animals are large, because they do look fierce, and because a trainer who can train a lion to feign attack can make himself look like a very great hero, indeed.

Tigers are the ones with stripes. They are considered by many trainers the most vicious and the least reliable of cats. The Indian tiger is perhaps slightly gentler than his neighbor, the Royal Bengal. The Indian tiger's stripes are not quite so sharp and they blend a little more into the fur. Both animals are extremely vicious. They are quick; they have mean tempers; but they also have a high degree of intelligence and can be trained to do a number of amazing tricks.

Damoo tells that when he started learning about animal training, at the age of thirteen, his first trick was to ride a tiger around the ring. His teacher told him, "If you can

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learn to get along with tigers, nothing will keep you from being a great animal man.”

The tiger is the largest of the cats next to the lion, frequently measuring twelve to thirteen feet from nose to tail, and weighing up to four hundred and fifty pounds. In action, the tiger probably looks fiercer than any of the other cats.

The leopard is a comparatively small, spotted animal. The average leopard weighs from one hundred and twenty-five to one hundred and eighty pounds. He is slinky. He is extremely quick and attacks by making one swift leap. In the jungle the leopard is a tree-climbing animal and will often hide on the limb of a tree and leap on any passing prey. Many naturalists contend that he is the best-camouflaged animal in the jungle. He is not easy to train, but has a very high degree of intelligence, and after his friendship has been won he can be taught a wide variety of tricks.

Many trainers have taught leopards to lie motionless while the trainer carries them on his shoulder. Damoo Dhotre has two leopards who permit him to carry them around his neck like fur pieces even though they weigh in the neighborhood of one hundred and fifty pounds.

The black panther is actually a freak leopard. Like humans, some animals are melanistic — that is, born with an excess of black pigment, a condition opposite to albinism, or lack of pigment. A spotted leopard may have a litter containing one or more black leopards; likewise, breeding two black leopards may produce either black or spotted or both.

This is the animal normally called the “panther” (though various countries often refer to some local animal as a

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panther). If you ever look at this sort of panther closely you will find that although his coat seems to be solid black, he actually contains the same spotting as a leopard in a black of even darker intensity than the rest of the coat. He is a freak, and perhaps because he is poorly camouflaged for the jungle the black panther is even quicker than the leopard and is commonly considered the most dangerous animal to work with. He is almost impossible to make friends with, and sometimes doesn't pass through even a short kitten stage. All other cats, when they are very young, are roly-poly and cuddly and playful – just like domestic kittens. The black panther, on the other hand, develops into a snarling mass of fury within a few weeks after he is born. He seems to know that things are going to be tough for one whose color deviates, and literally comes out fighting. He gets worse and worse throughout his life, and can be controlled only through sheer will-power and patience on the part of the trainer. He always remains a sullen and somewhat reluctant pupil.

The spotted jaguar looks like a leopard, but is native to the Western Hemisphere from Texas to Paraguay. He is slightly larger and more heavily built than the Asiatic or African leopard, and his face is larger and more triangular. His head and neck have a similarity to a bull's rather than a cat's. The jaguar is normally not too bright, although he can be trained, and he has the same kind of meanness that a leopard has. It is seldom that one finds trainers going out of their way to work with him.

The black jaguar has the same relation to the spotted jaguar as the panther does to the spotted leopard. It is a freak.

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It is poorly camouflaged and it is a vicious, violent animal. A trainer very seldom works with black jaguars because it isn't apparent to the audience that he is performing one of the most difficult jobs in wild animal training, and seems therefore not worth while. Damoo Dhotre, however, has a pair of black jaguars — for many years, I believe, the only trained ones in this country. He has taught them to do a number of difficult tricks including that of allowing themselves to be carried around his neck. Considering that Negus, the male, once used to attack Damoo every time they were in the ring together, this is something of a feat. But the average onlooker won't consider it as exciting as seeing Damoo with a leopard around his neck. What the onlooker doesn't know is that this is something personal.

Negus is the only animal of some hundreds that he has worked with that continued creating trouble for Damoo over a long period of time. Purely as a personal matter, Damoo determined that he was going to subdue and carry this animal on his shoulders before another year was out. Dangerous? Indescribably. Risky? Of course. But men who aren't built of this stuff should not and do not go into the business of training wild animals.

These were the various types of cats we had when I joined the show. Training any of them takes courage, skill, and patience, and a very long apprenticeship; pouring a mixed assortment of them into one cage at one time takes even more and is the most admired feat of all.

All wild animal trainers will admit that once an animal gets completely out of control there is nothing a trainer can do. Although there is a common belief that in a pinch the

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trainer can pull out his revolver and shoot the animal dead, this is certainly never done in the Ringling Brothers Circus and I doubt that it is resorted to elsewhere.

During my introduction to circus life and animal training I was surprised to learn that there wasn't a gun carried by anyone connected with the organization – unless perhaps in the pay wagon. The explanation seems logical enough. As Alfred Court said to me once, "What would you do with a gun? With an audience completely surrounding you, if you missed the animal you would undoubtedly hit one or more spectators; and," he added, "your chances of missing the animal would be excellent. Remember his attack is sudden. He is coming at you. He is moving. He is in the middle of a leap. He is diving. Once you have come to the point of realizing that a stick can't hold him off, he is almost on you. You fire at a quickly moving target. The chances of hitting him with one shot out of one try are almost negligible. Even if you are lucky enough to do that, you probably won't save yourself because he continues his leap which he has started. He probably won't die instantaneously because your aim can't be that good on a moving target and so you still get hurt or killed."

Their safety depends on their ability to keep the animals under control or to defend themselves in other ways against any animal out of control.

I spent many hours during those first few months leaning on a fence outside the cat barn talking to Alfred and Damoo. I believe I like cats partly because of my fondness for these two men; but I think it worked the other way too: because

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I was fond of cats, I instinctively liked these men and was fascinated by their profession.

Both of them seemed in many ways rather paradoxical. Alfred Court not only had the iron nerve and the physical dominance that all animal trainers must have but he was also a very courteous, almost Old World courtly person. His name might almost have been tailored for him.

Damoo, although short of stature, often impresses his audiences as a giant. He, too, has an air of physical dominance including a sort of daredevil quality. But Damoo is also something of an intellectual. He is steeped in a background of Hindu philosophy and Hindu mysticism. Although his life has not included more than five months of formal education, he is one of the most learned men I have ever met. His knowledge of animals is thoroughly practical, but since he has a keen interest in the animals he works with he also has read virtually every book on wild animals. He therefore knows his animals psychologically. He knows their backgrounds. He knows what causes their natural reactions. He knows why they do what they do. As a result, his performance in the ring is, to a real lover of animals, one of the most enlightening experiences in the world.

Like Tarzan, for whom he once doubled in a movie, Damoo was raised with wild animals. He was born in India and at the age of thirteen had already spent three years in his uncle's circus. Those years were spent as an acrobat, clown, and trick bicycle rider; but at thirteen he began training lions, as a student animal trainer. By the time he was seventeen he was well-known throughout India as a daredevil bicycle acrobat and an equally daredevil animal trainer.

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He has had many narrow escapes. He has on many occasions been attacked, and as he tells you of incidents in his past life he illustrates by showing you a scar here, a gash there. But he keeps reminding you that whenever a trainer gets hurt it is always the trainer's fault. "I have been hurt many times," he says; "and every time it was my own fault."

Most trainers agree that the chief fault among trainers and the chief reason for their being hurt is that they become overconfident and are inclined to forget that their animals are still jungle creatures. The trainer who remembers this is always on his guard. The trainer who doesn't eventually gets hurt or killed.

When I would see Damoo or Alfred casually walking into the ring with their animals, practicing their acts, fighting off unruly animals, and coming out again to have a frankfurter between rehearsals, I would ask them whether they ever worried about getting hurt someday. It seemed impossible that they did, and at the same time it seemed unlikely that they wouldn't. What I learned was that apparently with all wild animal trainers there is usually no fear as the rest of us know it. Damoo has told me many times that he is thoroughly aware of danger, that he knows just what each animal is likely to do to him; but this "fear," as he calls it, is apparently a mental process, not an emotional one. On the other hand, I have seen animal trainers who on certain days seemed really frightened.

I, myself, on the many occasions when I have gone into a cage with a wild animal, have usually been frightened. Through my own experiences and through talking to wild

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animal trainers I have evolved a theory that is at odds with that of the medical profession.

I had always heard that animals could "smell fear"; that if a human were really afraid of an animal, the animal would know it no matter what the person did to cover it up. I think this is wrong. I think I can provide evidence to make a case for the fact that animals cannot smell fear; that fear is not something tangible. I think animals can *sense* fear, but I think they get it through the tone of a person's voice and from his actions. I myself have handled horses, mean horses, of whom I was terrified; but by keeping my voice stern and my actions definite, I was able to keep that fact from the animals. Some of these horses, I know, would have kicked me into a corner if they had been able to smell my uncertainty. And I have gone into cages with bears and leopards who would have attacked me instinctively if they had felt I was bluffing my control of the situation.

I have talked with cage boys and trainers who admitted to being afraid and yet were able to keep the animals from knowing it simply by maintaining an attitude of dominance and a firm, strong, commanding tone of voice.

One day as I was walking over to the outdoor ring to watch Damoo rehearse his act, I noticed a cluster of people around one of the cages. I ran over to the cage. Damoo, who spends all his free hours walking up and down in front of the cages making friends with his animals and keeping an eye on them, had discovered a break in the tail of Lima, one of his pumas.



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Together we looked at the tail. Yes, definitely broken . . .

(We never discovered how this happened. It might have been clawed by a neighbor, although there were no claw marks. Sometimes when an animal is being shuttled from one cage to another, the cage boy swings the iron gate closed behind the animal too quickly while transferring him. A cat, as soon as he is through a gate, often swings around and starts through in the other direction. For this reason, the boys learn to work very rapidly closing the gates, and it may have been that Lima got her tail caught and broken that way.)

She didn't seem to be in pain. We decided that together we would run her into the squeeze cage and Damoo could go ahead and work the rest of the animals while I operated. I had never mended a puma's tail before, but of course I had had similar operations on domestic animals.

I had a couple of the cage boys hold her forepaws out through the bars of the squeeze cage and I gave her an injection of Nembutal. When she was asleep I opened the back end of the squeeze cage – I didn't bother to remove her because this operation didn't take very long – and set the tail, binding it tightly with a plaster cast which I hoped she wouldn't chew up too soon.

I watched her very carefully for the next few days. Although at first the cast bothered her and she did chew at it a little bit, she left enough on for protection; the tail stayed in place and the mere fact that there was an annoyance there tended to make Lima conscious enough of the tail to avoid swinging it around or getting it caught in places that might have injured it. When we removed the cast, her tail was per-

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fectly straight. Damoo put her right back into the act and she was an entirely healthy and presentable animal.

I stumbled across some amazing facts during those first few weeks: that big cats have sinus trouble, for instance. Alfred Court had suspected this for a long time, and now whenever an animal of his appeared sluggish he would call me over and we would examine it. Everything I found confirmed his suspicion. On certain days, certain of the lions would hang their heads low, indicating headache. They would be either ill-tempered or completely spiritless, depending on the individual animal.

I found that letting an animal rest for a couple of days would usually help him recover and frequently, mixing aspirin in his food would speed the process — 30 grains to a lion, 15 grains to a leopard, 60 grains to a horse. (Ten grains is the adult human dose.)

I knew that horses frequently suffer from sinus trouble when a cold is neglected and the animal is worked too hard. What apparently happens is that the cold in his system lowers his resistance and his sinus, being a weak point, becomes infected. When an animal drags his head you are probably correct in suspecting a severe headache.

A blow on the head sometimes causes sinus trouble in both horses and dogs. In these cases, as with humans, aspirin relieves the pain. There have been a few horses on which I have actually had to operate to drain the infection, but these cases are rare and I do it only when absolutely necessary.

I had bought a rather large and, as I recall, an expensive

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black leather-bound notebook, and here it was I began writing down jottings of new information, observation, theories, and just plain facts. This I hoped would be useful on the road when things were rushed and we were working on a tight schedule, when I didn't have time to sit and chat with trainers and cage boys and menagerie men before making decisions.

## CHAPTER IV    Elephants Have Tender Skins

SOMETIMES one recalls vividly certain experiences without being able to understand the importance of their details or why memory retains them.

When I was about five, a neighbor took me for a ride in his new, and in those days revolutionary, automobile. I asked for something during the ride — ice cream, I think — and he said very positively, “Nosiree!” I don’t know why I have gone on remembering that so clearly, but every time I saw that neighbor after that, although he was fond of me and went out of his way to do little favors, I wanted to run.

Likewise, I will always remember the day I discovered that elephants have tender skins, but this memory I do understand — and for a very good reason. The story starts back a bit, just before I joined the show.

Toward the end of the tour that year, there was a tragedy in Atlanta. Atlanta was on the swingback toward winter quarters and the show was to play there in October. Just about the time John Ringling North was telephoning me to offer me the job, the circus train was pulling into the Atlanta siding and preparing to unload.

Suddenly one after another, the elephants dropped on the ground. By the time the boys were ready to walk them to the lot most of the animals were out cold.

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The newspapers made a good deal of it at the time because there was something of a mystery attached to it. Obviously, the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey elephant herd had been poisoned.

A number of the animals died very quickly. The others were saved, although some of them were violently sick for a while. Nobody could imagine who would dislike elephants enough to feed them poison. What made the mystery even deeper was the fact that the elephant herd is never unguarded. It is guarded partly to keep people from teasing or hurting the animals and partly to keep the animals under control. If one elephant should ever break loose and go on a rampage the tendency is for the others to do so.

In this particular case the elephants had been watched very carefully and yet had been poisoned. The surviving elephants were treated on the spot. Post-mortems were performed on the dead elephants and it was determined by laboratory tests that arsenic had killed them.

The mystery was finally solved when it was found that not too far from the railroad siding at the previous stop there had been a chemical factory. Among the waste materials which it scattered — it supposed harmlessly — over the surrounding territory was arsenic. When, quite innocently, the elephants' hay had been scattered over this arsenic-covered ground some of the animals had taken enough to kill them. Those that didn't die still took enough to get sick.

The veterinarian who treated the elephants gave a medicine intravenously in the ear. In several cases, some of the medicine got out of the vein into the tender tissue of the ear and abscessed.

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By the time I joined the circus, we had some thirty elephants with abscesses behind their ears. Walter McClain broke the news to me. The elephants had had these abscesses for some weeks before I got there, but they weren't too serious. McClain knew that as soon as a veterinarian was hired he could take care of them. He was also smart enough not to confront me with a problem like that during my first day at work.

It was a gray, drizzly morning and I was puttering in the hospital when McClain casually wandered in. He sat down on an old army cot, offered me a cigarette and lit one for himself. We chatted idly for thirty minutes or so and then he asked, "Doc, you know much about elephants?"

"No, I don't know anything about elephants."

"Doc, we've got some sick elephants."

"That's just fine," I said. "What's wrong with them?"

"Well," he said, "you remember reading about the poisoning in Atlanta. A lot of them are still suffering from the after-effects."

"Well, I'll see what can be done about it," I said. "Do they let you treat them?"

"Yes," he said slowly. "I think maybe the two of us might be able to manage. On the whole they are fairly calm while you are treating them — that is, of course, if you are stronger than they are."

I laughed at what I hoped was Walter's joke but deep down inside I felt a little bit uncomfortable. Elephants for some reason made me feel more than a little bit timid. Part of this was due to their complete lack of relationship to any other animal and partly it was because of their tremendous

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size. There was also the well-known fact that elephants aren't very trustworthy; highly intelligent, yes — probably the most intelligent of all wild animals except chimps. But also mean, unpredictable. They have been known to attack, for no apparent reason. Despite my qualms, they had to be worked on, however; and I was only thankful an intelligent elephant man like Walter McClain was around to help. I got some of my equipment together and we started walking over to the elephant kraal.

"I'll tell you one thing about these elephant abscesses," Walter said. "Just draining won't be enough. I guess you would call them incapsulated abscesses, because what happens is that a capsule seems to have formed between the cartilage and the skin. Instead of just digging a hole and draining, you'll have to cut and actually remove the whole capsule."

"Well," I said, "let me open one up and I'll soon find out."

The elephant kraal is really a row of open sheds formed into a square with a watering trough in the center. As you enter, you find four solid rows of elephants staring at you from around the sides. Each is chained to a ring embedded in concrete by one hind and one front leg. There is a loose chain strung across in front of each row of animals to keep people from getting too close to them. In the circus, this is known as the "picket line."

The elephant who was in particular pain this day was named Jenny. She was restless. She was moving her head in circles and stamping her feet. Walter and I approached her cautiously, and Walter grabbed the elephant hook.

This is a stick about the length of a broom handle. On the

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end of it is a small, dull hook. This hook is used by all elephant men in leading and training elephants. It doesn't hurt the animal, but it tugs at her in one direction or another and she soon learns to respect orders given by means of the hook.

Walter got in front of Jenny, holding her trunk up and her head down. I could just about reach the area in back of the ear where it was necessary to operate. As soon as I touched her, Jenny started bobbing her head and weaving despite the hook.

"Why is she bouncing so much?" I asked Walter anxiously. "I am not hurting her. I am just patting her ear."

"Touching them can drive them nearly crazy," Walter said. "Didn't you know, Doc, that elephants have very tender skins?"

"Are you kidding?" I scoffed, slapping my hand sharply on Jenny's gray hide to disprove Walter's joke. To my amazement Jenny never flinched. She even seemed to calm.

"That's what I mean, Doc," Walter laughed. "They love a firm slap, but a fly or a tickle on their skin will drive them crazy."

I was being crowded by the elephant next to Jenny because the elephants on the picket line are chained rather close to each other. I took out my syringe and, after mopping the area with antiseptic, injected a local anesthetic just to be sure. An anesthetic isn't very good for this kind of thing usually, because an animal can fight the injection as much as the operation, and an infected part like this isn't too responsive because of the fact that the infection more or less insulates against the anesthesia. Then I got out my instruments and began to cut. I may have hurt her a little, or she may



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have been just a little nervous at being treated. She began bobbing her head and squealing and I began losing my self-assurance. One quick move of her head or trunk, or leg, and I was the next likely patient. I gritted my teeth and tried to set my mind on the matter at hand.

Suddenly, without my knowing it, the elephant next in line — for what reason I will never know — dropped her trunk on the concrete with a loud thud that sounded like a clap of thunder and let out a terrific bellow. I dropped everything in my hands and instinctively dashed outward. I had just started to turn when I hit the chain. It was loose, and as my weight made it go taut, it sprung me back and I landed flat on my back underneath Jenny.

I lay sprawled on the ground, half-stunned, more scared than I have ever been in my life, when Jenny's bladder overflowed. Then I moved so fast that it might be described as bouncing.

Only one thing saved me from giving up the circus then and there, and that was Walter McClain. He had dropped the hook and he was down on his knees, rocking back and forth and laughing fit to kill. His attitude eased me immediately and I managed to pull myself together, patch up my dampened dignity, and, in a much calmer frame of mind, continue the operation.

I have had hundreds of such operations since, but I have never liked them — not one. As a general rule, the abscess becomes as big as a man's hand and I have to make a correspondingly big opening through which to work. The abscess must be packed with silver nitrate to loosen the capsule, and then worked around and around by hand until the entire

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capsule is loosened and can be taken out through the opening. It is seldom painful to the elephant, but they make a terrible fuss simply because they do not like to be handled.

Elephants, I fear, could never be influenced by the "soft feminine touch."

An elephant will invariably toss hay and dirt, or whatever he can get his trunk around, onto his back. It is seldom you see an elephant without this layer of dirt and hay on his back. The hay and dirt is insulation against the pricks and tickles of flies and mosquitoes, an elephant's worst enemies. This surprised me, because I had always thought, as I suppose most people do, that an elephant is a thick-skinned animal. He simply looks that way. I have learned that hippopotami and rhinoceroses also have tender skins. The worst thing you can do to them is to walk up and touch them lightly. (This is a good thing to remember when considering walking up to pat a hippo.)

An elephant's normal temperature is ninety-nine to a hundred degrees, but the temperature of the veterinarian taking it always shoots sky-high when he is trying to get a reading on an elephant. The thermometer is about four inches long, but it is breakable; and it can be lost — I always tie a string to the one I am using so I can recover it. And whenever the performance of temperature taking is necessary, I always like to have the elephant trainer handy. When the trainer is around, the animal has a combination of both fear and confidence. He has a fear of doing something he is not supposed to do, and the confidence that no harm will come to him. Sometimes the trainer, himself, will take the elephant's temperature. More often, he will stand at the animal's head and

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talk to her and just generally keep her calm while I try to get the reading.

When we do find an elephant with a high temperature and other symptoms of stomach upset, we have our work unpleasantly cut out for us. A horse can be fed a laxative or any other medicine by means of a capsule. There's no trick at all to making a horse swallow such a capsule. This is not true of an elephant. An elephant's mouth can't be held open. His teeth are hard and strong and you can't take a chance on putting your hand in his mouth if you are making him do something he doesn't want to do. He won't swallow anything he doesn't want to swallow, and his tongue is so powerful that nothing can get past it if the elephant doesn't approve. All in all, he is a difficult patient.

The first time one of Walter McClain's elephants got an upset stomach, I decided simply to feed her a laxative through a stomach tube. That didn't work. It would work on any other animal; to get a tube into the stomach you insert it through the nose. Well . . . It next became a matter of working with the trainer and holding the elephant's head back and trying to get her to swill down the laxative. (The normal laxative dose for an elephant is one gallon of raw linseed oil.)

The elephant was Eva. It took about five gallons before we got one gallon into Eva's stomach. She would stick her trunk in her mouth, draw out the medicine we had managed to pour in and squirt it all over Walter and me. We sloshed around ankle-deep in laxative, and decided sadly that as a general routine this was not going to work. A new system was called for.

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I next tried a medicine called Lentin, and this later became my standard elephant procedure. Lentin is a laxative that can be given by injection. It is extremely strong and has to be administered with great care. It immediately starts secretion of all the glands in the body and it works in about ten minutes. If there is a danger that the animal may have an obstruction in his intestine, Lentin can kill him.

Elephants come down with chills frequently, exactly the way horses do. It is easy to medicate a horse with brandy, using a dose syringe; but an elephant is almost impossible to treat with a dose syringe. A dose syringe is long enough to reach way back into an animal's mouth; by holding the animal's head back and unloading the syringe you can make him swallow. Not an elephant. When they have chills and won't take brandy, I give them an injection of camphorated oil and guaiacol or some similar preparation.

The elephants have always been a sort of veterinarian's nuisance factor, because they seldom get anything very serious but they are continually ailing with one little thing or another. For instance, very often a tusk will break and the root will have to be extracted (what I do then is to cut back three or four inches and pick out the broken pieces of tusk).

All of our elephants are females because we have found that the males tend to be troublemakers. Since elephants won't breed very well in captivity, there is no advantage in having males.

We make it a practice to remove a large portion of the

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tusk as soon as we get an elephant, so if she should start to make trouble, she will be a good deal less dangerous than she would be if she still had her very sharp tusks. But my first day's qualms turned out to be groundless: removing a tusk is a fantastically simple process. One of the boys coaxes her down on her knees and I take her tusks off about four inches from her cheeks with a hacksaw. There is no sensitivity and the elephants don't seem to mind the carpentering in the least!

When Walter McClain was alive — he met a tragic death shortly after I joined the circus — he and I used to talk frequently about breeding elephants. It has proved to be virtually impossible, at least in this country. There have been reports from Germany and Italy that elephants have been bred in captivity and the offspring have lived. As far as I can check this has not happened in this country. There have been a negligible number of cases of elephants having been bred, but none where the offspring have lived over thirty days. I think the reason for this is that the elephants must be left alone and must be kept very calm and unexcited before they will breed.

I would like, someday, to buy a good male elephant, pick three or four of our better females and put them off four or five miles from the circus grounds in a large field, in a large pen by themselves. I should like to leave two or three men with them to take care of them and prohibit anybody else from coming near them. Undisturbed by people, by sounds, by automobiles — left alone in the wilderness, as it were — I think they might stand a pretty good chance of producing healthy offspring. If so, it would be a famous "first" in this

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country and I think the publicity value to the circus would be immense.

Elephant men are among the busiest of animal men, because their charges are probably the only ones in captivity that need manicuring. Elephants have all kinds of trouble with their feet. Their pads get sore; they become infected; they have the same kind of cuticle trouble human beings do, only worse. An elephant man's spare time is usually spent working on cuticles, paring toe nails, polishing, rubbing with antiseptic, and, if the elephant act is going to be extremely fancy that year, actually applying fingernail polish.

Our elephants have to walk on concrete going to and from the lots. We have found that it is rather hard on their feet. To avoid serious trouble, we examine each elephant's feet every day. We look for cracks, breaks, and slight infections, and treatment begins at once before the animal becomes lame. This is good for the animal and we have found that the time spent is decidedly worth our while.

Sometimes our elephant charges turn up with new, unknown diseases. I had a phone call recently from an animal man in St. Louis. He had a trained elephant act and one of the elephants had developed a rather prominent swelling under the belly over an area of perhaps two and a half or three feet. He had asked a couple of local veterinarians but they were pretty much in the dark because there is nothing in horses that corresponds to it. I had run across a minor case only once in the circus, but I told him to apply hot

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towels; to keep the animal's belly cased in hot packs, held on with a sling, and to keep constantly wetting them. I also suggested that he give her streptomycin daily for five days. As far as I could guess, it was a toxic condition caused by an infection somewhere in the elephant's system and it was collecting under the skin at the lowest portion of the animal's body. I doubted very much if it was an infection of that immediate area, or that it was a serious infection anywhere else. The trainer treated the animal as I suggested and checked with me by phone every day. Within two weeks his elephant was all right and the ailment never recurred.

Particularly as they grow older, elephants are likely to suffer from paralyzed trunk. A sort of creeping paralysis comes over this vital part, and although the animal can move it the trunk does not have its usual flexibility nor does it have its normal strength. An elephant with paralyzed trunk can feed himself pretty well, but instead of being able to trunk up and drop his food into his mouth, he has to toss his head and catch his meal in mid-air.

The minor ailments can usually be put into the hands of the elephant boys, as for instance when their skins get dry and have to be oiled. Once the proper oil has been given to the boy, he can rub it in as well or better than I, because he is there all the time and the animal knows him.

Elephants bite each other's tails, partly out of nervousness and partly because that's the way elephants are. The tails get infected at the bitten part and they have to be treated continually with hot packs and sulfa and other medications. Here, too, I like to keep my eye on a hurt animal every day, but I have found it perfectly safe, and in fact advisable, to

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leave the actual treatment to a good, reliable man who is with the animal all the time.

I got over most of my fear of elephants eventually, but, with one notable exception, I have never managed to work up any warmth of feeling for them.

The exception is Ruthie, leader of the herd, a wonderful animal, and an invaluable aid in disciplining other unruly pachyderms. The first time I had trouble dosing a colicky elephant McClain brought Ruth over. By sheer force of personality, apparently, she calmed the patient while I treated her. I became, in time, quite attached to Ruth, and she is still my chief assistant in my elephant work.

I'll always remember how I learned about elephants from Jenny; but animal men agree that elephants, on their part, do forget. I often wish, particularly when the night is rainy and our traveling schedule tight, that they and their keepers would forget all about me for a little while.



## CHAPTER V    We Don't Shoot Them Any More

I LIKE HORSES. I know they are excitable and have to be watched carefully, and I will admit they aren't as smart as some of the other animals. They get injured easily and don't take care of themselves too well. But I like them.

It may be that my accumulation of knowledge about them does things for my ego. I don't know what the reason is. It doesn't make any difference. When I am working with horses, no matter how hard the work or how long the hours, I am contented.

I like horses. I know how they act and why. I think I know what goes on in their heads. I know how to tell a horse what I am thinking, and I know how to figure out what *he* is thinking. I have taught horses practically everything you can teach a horse; and I have learned a lot from them, too.

A horse can be the most beautiful animal in the world if he is healthy and well-cared for. He can be a good companion for the long pull, or a means of escape in a crisis. Horses can save you or ruin you, hurt you or protect you. They surpass all other animals in their ability to respond to human attention. I like them.

During my first weeks in Sarasota, I was lonesome — lonesome for my horse, a mare named Benny V. She

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was a colt when I last saw her in Kerrville, the fifth generation of a line owned by my father ever since his marriage. The first animal he owned was Benny V's great, great, great-grandmother. I couldn't have her with me in Shreveport, but here in Sarasota we had all the space in creation. It was a heaven for horses. There was no reason why Benny V and I couldn't be together.

She arrived one Saturday morning. She looked wonderful. I spent all that morning scrubbing and grooming her and then left her in the lower corral with orders that she be turned loose in the pasture for several hours a day. My plan was to leave her here while I was on the road, hoping she would be in good shape for breeding the following year. I didn't breed her now, because I wanted to be around when she foaled. It looked very much as though I were soon to be raising a family and it was a pretty happy feeling. Horses can do that to a man.

On one of my daily inspections of the horses, my attention was taken by a big, black stallion named Lindy who had a swelling just above his stifle. He was one of the best saddle horses I have ever known. His lameness bothered me a great deal.

Lindy didn't seem to limp very much and the groom had told me he thought the infection was draining. But for some reason I didn't like the look of it. It had hung on far too long.

For two or three days, I tried draining the infection, but somehow or other it never seemed to get any better. It was very hard to examine because, although Lindy was a gentle horse normally and never caused any trouble, the minute I

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went near his bad leg he would strike out in all directions with what seemed like all four feet at once.

On this day, as on most others, I had more things to do than there was time for: I was always being forced to put off a lot of routine work for some emergency. By the afternoon, everything seemed to be under control and there was nothing pressing for attention, so I gave Lindy a local anesthetic much against his will and opened up the infection. I took out a piece of stick about two-and-a-half inches long and about three quarters of an inch in diameter. It had apparently run up at an angle in his leg above the knee. No one saw it happen and there had been only the smallest wound. I don't know how long it had been there, but it was easy to see why the infection hadn't cleared.

About a week later, I was a little puzzled to find that this same infection was still draining. It was just as though nothing had been done to it. This time I was seriously worried, so I immediately went for my equipment. I got three of the better grooms to help me; we laid the horse down and I injected a shot of anesthetic that put him completely to sleep. I had decided to open the leg. I went into the wound the way I had before, but this time I continued cutting. This time, I found that the area continued clear on through to the other side of the leg. Before I finished, I pulled out another piece of stick some six inches long. Apparently Lindy had rubbed against something or had fallen; this splinter went almost directly upward in one side of the leg and almost out the other side.

After this, I kept his leg packed for a few days and it healed beautifully. There was not the slightest suggestion of a limp

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and this pleased me, because for a performing horse it isn't enough to make him well: from an economic standpoint, you must make him well enough to perform; it wouldn't pay to have a horse on which thousands of dollars have been spent for training and be able to use him only for hauling a float. He must go back into his act.

Some of the things that happen to our horses in the process of the amazing tricks they do are rather spectacular; some of the treatments and cures are equally so. But whether the treatment is spectacular or not, the horses, because of their great number and their great value, are a continual source of trouble.

The way my new routine was working out, I was spending about half my time with the horses. Coming out to winter quarters early, I would first make my rounds of the horse corral. Then I would examine any animal that I knew was sick or injured or any animal that had required working on in the last day or two.

Then I would go through the menagerie, the elephant kraal, the outdoor menagerie cages, the monkey house, the lower corral, and end up with the cat barn.

Also I was called continually all day and frequently at night to examine animals that weren't acting right. Most of the time these didn't require much actual attention: the cage boys, the trainers' helpers, and the grooms all had strict orders to call me if they had the slightest suspicion that an animal was off-color, and they did their work well; but that meant they called me many times when an animal had some slight discomfort that didn't require treating — something that pos-

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sibly could simply be slept off. It was better that way, but it was hectic and time-consuming.

Furthermore, I was still spending a lot of time talking to people; talking to the cage boys, talking to the performers. I was trying to learn as much about the circus, as such, as I possibly could, so that I wouldn't be bothered with the little matters of timing and routine when we went on the road and, therefore, could devote all my energy to the animals.

My hospital was coming along fine. The management ordered anything I wanted in the way of medicine and equipment. I had had new shelves put in, and now took pride in my small and unpretentious but efficient little setup.

So much of my time was spent with the horses because it was a sure bet that once they started traveling there would be illnesses, accidents, fights and other mishaps. I wanted to become so well acquainted with each individual horse that there would be no chance of anything progressing when I could nip it in the bud. I had to operate on the theory of the old-time family physician who perhaps knew more about his patients than he did about medicine, rather than the newer type of doctor who knows more about medicine than he does about his patients.

One morning, shortly after a very early breakfast, Jerry, a beautiful, big white bareback horse, was brought into the indoor training ring for rehearsal. Jerry was the Number One horse in a horse-to-horse trick. The two horses cantered around the ring, one immediately behind the other. While they ran, an acrobat standing on Jerry's back, would jump into the air, do a backward somersault and land on the back of the Number Two horse. This was a rather spectacular act

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and a very difficult one to do. Jerry was a good horse and he had been doing this routine for a number of years.

On this particular morning, there was a loud commotion inside the barn just as I walked past the door. Tiny, a thirty-inch midget with the act, came running out calling "Hey, Doc!" in his high thin voice.

I ran in to find Jerry down on the ground. He had stepped on the ring curb and broken his leg. All bareback horses are trained to follow the ring curb around. I have seldom known one to step on it. One quick look at him and I found that the break was right above the hoof.

Leaving him where he was, I ran for my emergency kit; then several assistants and I went to work on him to set the bone. Down where the break was, there was very little flesh and I could set it by touch. I prepared some plaster of Paris and made a cast. We walked Jerry back on three legs to his stall, where he immediately lay down.

Jerry was a wonderful patient and that is what saved his life. For the next eight weeks he spent twenty-three-and-a-half hours of every twenty-four lying down in his stall. He even ate lying down. When he did stand up, he did it very carefully and he held the injured leg off the ground. When he did lie down, he did it as carefully as though he were settling down on a bed of eggs. The bottom of the bandaged leg never even got dirty!

He came through it all beautifully. We cut down on his feed so his lying around wouldn't make him fat and sluggish or colicky, or give him any of the diseases that horses get from eating too much and not exercising enough. Within six months, Jerry was perfectly healthy and walked without a

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limp. He was never good for bareback work again, though, because he had turned ring-shy. He was always afraid he was going to hit that ring curb, and he was unsure enough of himself to be unreliable in the ring. But we did use him for a number of other purposes for a long time after that, and he was always a good horse.

Jerry was replaced in the act by Tom, who had been similarly trained, but even before we got on the road, Tom proved unsatisfactory. During rehearsal one day he lit out with both hind feet for no apparent reason and kicked the head of the Number Two horse. There wasn't much I could do about the injured horse except to ease his pain a little and take care of the flesh wound. His head healed with a very obvious dent in it. For show purposes, we managed to cover it up with a tassel or flower, but that horse became ring-shy in another way. He would no longer run behind any other horse. So we trained him as the Number One horse to replace Tom, and a new Number Two horse had to be broken in to work with him.

Frequently, when a horse is sick he gets what is known as azoturia. In the old days, we use to call that "Monday-morning sickness." It comes of a horse lying around all day Sunday, eating as much as he does when working. Starting to work on Monday morning, he practically becomes rigid. The pectoral muscles stiffen and he has what amounts to a muscular spasm. He stands absolutely rigid, stiff, trembling. The danger comes if he tries too hard or if he is forced to move; he stands a good chance of rupturing a muscle or some internal organ.

When azoturia does come on, although we make every at-

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tempt to keep it down by cutting the feed when the animals aren't working, I always give them an injection of something to relax them, and then a calcium gluconate injection to restore their strength. They are usually all right within a couple of hours.

I haven't had many bone breaks, luckily. Although most of them can now be treated, the constant traveling makes for complications.

There was a white Shetland I treated in Shreveport. This pony broke his leg rather high up, which required putting his entire leg in a metal splint. The splint, which Dr. Young built out of aluminum, was so made that it fitted him up around his hip and extended down a couple of inches below his hoof. We bored a hole through his hoof and bolted that to the splint. It was like a permanent crutch, and that Shetland could actually walk while the break was healing because his weight was on his body rather than on his leg. That is now a common treatment for fractures for a number of four-legged animals. Not so long ago, these same animals would have been shot.

I was learning new things even about horses during these first four months in winter quarters. Things were happening so fast, I often didn't dare wait until somebody called me. Awaiting a crisis was only inviting a crisis. My seven hundred animals all needed attention every day. Out of seven hundred animals, just in the ordinary course of events, it wasn't hard to figure the incidence of sickness and accidents. As we drew closer and closer to the first of April, which was opening day in New York, rehearsals were increasing in frequency and intensity and there was an increasing number of the little



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accidents that always happen when animals get together.

What I learned about horses was the result of having so many horses doing so many different things in one place, at one time. I developed routine treatments for every foreseeable contingency, because only with a well worked-out routine would it be possible to handle all of the animals on the road.

Take the routine of anesthetizing a horse, for example. I never give him Nembutal because it makes horses toss around a good deal while they are coming out of it. It is terribly dangerous for a horse to thrash around. He can hurt himself too easily. A chloral hydrate anesthesia is much preferable. I don't always anesthetize completely, but even a small amount of chloral hydrate takes the fight out of them and removes practically all the pain. While doing a thorough internal operation, I simply use a large dose of chloral hydrate.

During this period, it was necessary to castrate a number of horses. I have never liked to castrate horses without good reason but there are times when a male is mean and too hard to handle unless he is castrated. Our experience has been that geldings, or castrated males, make by far the best performers in the ring. Studs, although sometimes good, are likely to be too excitable and unreliable. They are the biters and kickers. Mares are good except when they are in heat; then they, too, become extremely wild and are likely to bite and kick. But a well-trained gelding, in the long run, is the best performing horse. Whether the circus learned this from the Western cowboys I don't know. But I do know that cowboys will almost never ride a mare, although for

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different reasons. They almost always, to my knowledge, ride geldings.

Arthur Konyot, who was training the Liberty Act, came over to see me one day and complained of a horse, a very bright horse and a very good performer, but a very mean animal. I examined him and found something that one finds only occasionally in horses: he had only one testicle. It was up in his abdomen and had never dropped. It had to be brought down by means of what is known as a ridgeling operation.

I anesthetized him completely, tied him up, and cut a hole in the region of the groin. I got my hand in through the hole and poked around inside until I found the testicle and, with an instrument, removed it.

This horse was all right within a very few weeks and every trace of stubbornness left him. I made the groom walk him three or four miles a day while he was recovering, for I have found that this continued forced exercising of a horse while he is recovering from an operation is probably the best post-operative treatment you can give him. (From my reading lately, I gather that medical doctors are finding that very much the same thing holds true for human patients.)

There are also some of our horses whom one might call neurotic. There is never a year that I don't have one or two that are veritable babies about the slightest illness. The smallest touch of colic will make them thrash around and kick and roll in their stalls unless somebody gives them a little attention. Then they will calm down and happily take their medicine. But the minute they are left alone, they start thrashing around again.

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This thrashing around is so dangerous, especially if a horse is colicky, that I used to do almost anything to avoid it. And then one day, I found a treatment that has worked beautifully ever since. The medicine I give horses for colic is a very sharp, burning mixture. It is usually fed to them in a capsule so that they don't taste it. One day, while treating one of these hypochondriacs, I took a little of this medicine out of the capsule, put it in a dose syringe, and dropped it in his mouth. He tossed his head. He poked his tongue out trying to get rid of it, but he couldn't. It burned him and he didn't like it. That gave him something to think about. By the time he had forgotten about that, he had also forgotten about his illness. He slept quietly for the rest of the day.

Some of our gentlest horses are among our worst patients. We have a little bay hackney named Sally, a beautiful horse. She usually never causes any trouble, and never fights with the other horses. But the minute anyone tries to give her any kind of medicine in the mouth, she rears up and paws with her front feet. She could easily kill a careless attendant.

Our horses are temperamental because they perform. They are always keyed up, tense, and very nervous when they are being saddled to go into the act; and they are always very calm right after it. This is partly due to their training, and partly because trainers have found that high-strung and the high-spirited horses make much better performers than full, listless, too gentle horses.

There are horses that can't bear to be separated from their mates. This is a characteristic that many people, particularly those with little experience, attribute only to monkeys. My experience with monkeys has been otherwise. This character-

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istic in fact isn't particularly true of any other animal, but I know there are horse couples that can't stand being separated.

That first year, we had two American saddle horses that didn't get on well together. They used to fight all the time. Nevertheless, if one was taken out and saddled, obviously to go to work, it didn't affect the other. But if it was taken out for any other reason, such as to go to the blacksmith shop or for some other unaccustomed purpose the other would neigh and whinny and break out into a sweat and thrash around until it, too, had to be taken away.

After watching this for a while, I gave orders that whenever one horse had to be taken anywhere, they both should go together. After that, we had no more trouble.

We had two beautiful white Liberty horses, Ackman and Alle. They were mates, but we noticed no particular attachment, though we knew that they never fought and had been stablemates for a long time. One night, Ackman died of a twisted intestine. Alle carried on in a way that I have never seen any other animal do. She whinnied continually. She refused to eat and she refused to sleep. We doctored her; we tried her with new mates; we tried a change of scene; we tempted her with every possible food; we did everything in the way of medication and psychology to increase her appetite, but she simply wasted away. Within two months she died of what can only be described as a broken heart.

There are pests too, of course. We are seldom troubled with the dreaded botfly — which, throughout the South and Southwest, is the bane of a farmer's existence. It lays its eggs

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on the short hair around the horse's knee and under the chin. The horse is annoyed by the itching and licks the eggs off. The larvae, in turn, hatch in his stomach and attach themselves to the stomach wall. To avoid this, we watch for evidence of botfly eggs on horses' legs, and simply mop them off with kerosene. The circus has one groom to every three horses, which gives a chance for the kind of care that almost no farmer can afford.

Every time a new horse arrives, he is wormed immediately. I don't worm our horses every year because it hasn't been necessary. But I do see that every horse is wormed at least once in three years.

*Strongylus equinus* — a little roundworm that sucks an animal's blood — worries farmers, and we watch carefully for signs of it to treat.

We also have a number of cases of quarter-crack among our horses. This means the hoof starts to crack up top, at the fleshy part. A wound develops there, an infection sets in, and the hoof crack would, if it weren't stopped, continue all the way down the hoof till the horse was permanently lame. We watch for this because it is common and as soon as we see any sign, we take the horse over to our blacksmith shop and have his shoes specially made to stop the ailment and allow healing.

Sometimes a horse has to be put away. Sometimes he is old and sick. Sometimes he is badly wounded. Sometimes he has an incurable break or an incurable disease. When things like this happen, we don't worry about the technicalities. We destroy the animal, and we know, and everybody else knows, that this is a "mercy killing," that there

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can't be any ulterior motive. Perhaps it is fortunate for me that our animals don't make wills.

We do it in the most painless way we know. In the case of horses, I usually inject the animal with strychnine. There is no feeling until the strychnine hits the heart, then the animal dies instantaneously. We bury him in a big field we keep as our animal cemetery at the far end of our winter quarters.

There is an ailment among horses called founder or laminitis. It can come from overeating, overexercising, or drinking too much water. It can also be caused when a horse foals or aborts. This is a very painful swelling of the tender tissue inside the foot. My usual experience has been that founder either responds to treatment immediately, or it can't be treated successfully at all and the horse is in so much pain he has to be destroyed. In this disease, the sole of the foot drops down below the wall of the hoof and causes excruciating pain.

I had two cases of founder during my first weeks with the show. One was a bareback horse. The cure was so complete and so rapid that he was back in the act within a week. The other was a high school horse. A high school horse is a horse which with no apparent direction from the rider will do things like standing on his hind legs, dancing, walking sideways, waltzing, getting down on his knees, bowing, waving a flag, or walking up and shaking hands with the band leader. There is, of course, perfect direction from the rider. Horses like this take two to three years of continual expert training in order to be good performers.

The trainers, themselves, usually take a lifetime of training. In almost every case I can think of, they have come from

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families of high school riders and high school trainers. Probably the most famous example in recent years is the great Konyot who was with the circus when I joined it and remained for several years after that. It was one of his horses that came down with founder, and it seemed impossible that any cure could be complete enough to allow him to go back into the act. Because such horses have to maneuver almost the way a human being does; they have to be able to do things that one has no right to expect even a well horse to do.

However, I would try.

I injected about a pint of normal saline solution into this horse's vein every three or four days. I also gave him normal horse serum every day, dosed him with alum nitrate every four hours and kept his front feet wrapped in cold compresses. As soon as he showed improvement I stopped the alum nitrate but continued the other treatment. In a few weeks he was back in the act without a trace of limp.

When we were ready to go on tour, it was a safe bet that these horse troubles were just beginning, but this phase of my work worried me the least. There is always a great deal of satisfaction to be earned by caring for horses, and in my case they helped develop the self-confidence I lacked for work in other animal departments. To put a new twist on a famous remark: I like horses. I am glad I like them. Because if I didn't like them, I wouldn't be around them, and I like being around them.

## CHAPTER VI Training the Big Cats

**T**RAINING WILD ANIMALS has nothing at all to do with my job or with veterinary medicine in general and I have no desire to become a trainer. I have never trained a wild animal to perform, although I have raised two of them. However, I did develop a very real interest in this profession, or art, during my first weeks with the circus, because of the tremendous difficulties of the job and because of my friendship with the trainers who worked with the show.

I learned a good deal about the big cats from Alfred Court and even more from Damoo Dhotre. Damoo's whole approach to animal training is unusual. Having a very curious as well as a very alert mind, he has studied the animals both as species and as individuals. Damoo taught me most of what I know about training cats.

A trainer's job takes a combination of physical agility, mental alertness, and courage. It is naturally dangerous. The trainers who live long are those who remember that a wild animal is never, never tamed, but only trained. Damoo has told me time and time again that whenever a trainer gets hurt, it is always the trainer's fault — and this is not the boasting of a smug man who has happened to be lucky: Damoo has been badly hurt and he has been in danger of



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death. What he means is that it is bad to become overconfident, to forget that the animals are still wild, still savage, and always on the borderline of getting completely out of control.

Damoo's theory on training a wild animal is similar, he says, to that of training a child. "The first step," he says, "is to remove the animal's fear. An animal is instinctively afraid of a stranger; and because he is afraid, he will attack."

Damoo spends countless hours in front of a cage containing a new animal. He stands near the cage. He talks to the animal. He sings to it. He calms it with his voice. He woos it with tidbits of meat pierced on the tip of a long pole. Eventually, sometimes after weeks, the animal stops flying into a panic when Damoo approaches.

When he has an animal at that point, he takes him into the training cage, making sure that there are ropes around the animal and that those ropes are held taut by boys outside the cage. Then he plays with him, meanwhile doing everything possible to inspire the animal's confidence: he assures the animal that he is not going to be hurt, he talks to him, he feeds him, and eventually he returns him to his cage.

When the animal has become thoroughly friendly, Damoo starts teaching him simple tricks. With the aid of the boys holding the ropes, Damoo gives him the signal for his sitting on the pedestal. He shows him what is expected of him and rewards him with a piece of meat when he obeys. After several sessions with the guide rope and the meat, the animal begins to recognize Damoo's signal and, every time he hears it, he goes toward the pedestal. Other tricks are taught in the same way.

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When Damoo is convinced that the animal is thoroughly broken, that he won't fly into a panic and attack him, he teaches him without ropes. He shows him precisely what he wants him to do. He always gives exactly the same signal and uses the same tone of voice, followed by a reward.

This is, perhaps, an oversimplification of the wild animal training process, but it gives an idea as to how these men approach a difficult and very dangerous job.

In each hand, he carries a stick, half a broom handle or a piece of split bamboo. When the animal shows signs of wanting to bite — and they do — Damoo offers him one of the two sticks, and lets him chew on that, while with the other he will push or prod him and let him know where he wants him to go.

When Damoo is training an animal, he carries a whip over his shoulder, used for signaling. Contrary to popular belief, seldom are animals beaten by a trainer. It stands to reason, if a trainer wants an animal to lose his fear, he is hardly likely to beat him up every time he comes in contact with him. Animals are hit, much in the same way that children are spanked, in order to show that certain behavior is unacceptable. This is a far cry from beating animals into submission.

Damoo's general formula is first to remove the fear of the animal and then to inspire in the animal both proper fear and respect. The fear he teaches is only the fear of doing something wrong, the fear of being punished if he either disobeys or becomes dangerous. As Damoo says, "If a child is allowed to do anything he likes and is never disciplined, he will have no respect for his parents and he will grow up to be a gangster. If, on the other hand, a child is beaten into sub-

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mission at every point, he will have no respect but he will have fear and a grudge. He will wait for the chance to turn on his parents and if he can't turn on them, he will turn on someone else. He, too, is headed for gangsterdom. In animals, too," he says, "there must be both fear and respect. He is punished only for doing wrong and he must know *why* he is being punished each time. He must be rewarded for being good, and he must be made to understand what he has done to gain his trainer's favor. When you have this combination," says Damoo, "you have a good animal. But he is still not *tamed*. He will never be tamed. You must watch yourself at every instant."

Damoo himself, though he has been attacked again and again, only severely hits an animal when there is a real fight and real danger, when the choice is between hitting the animal and being hurt.

Damoo goes into the cage with five spotted leopards, two pumas, two black jaguars, and two black panthers. One of the panthers still attacks him at the slightest provocation. I have seen Damoo time and again avoid the animal's claw by less than an inch.

I watched Damoo train Negus — the 170-pound black jaguar who once almost killed him — to be carried around on his shoulders. When he first started, Negus would not even stand on the two low stools from which Damoo would eventually lift him. Until then Negus knew only one trick, climbing up to the top of a pyramid with other animals. By roping him, and feeding him, Damoo finally got him to the point where he would stand on the two stools, his forelegs on one and his hind legs on the other. When the jaguar did

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this, Damoo would reward him with a piece of meat held out on the pointed end of a stick. After several days of feeding him in this manner, the trainer would pat him on the back to get him used to his touch. Then he went one step further: he put his arm around Negus's back and exerted pressure on his belly with the palm of his hand. This was to get Negus used to that pressure he would feel when Damoo put his neck under Negus's belly to lift him.

During the first few days of this, Negus was frightened. He would lash out at Damoo and then run for his own pedestal. But by slow and patient work, Damoo got to the point where he could get one arm under the animal's belly and lift him two or three inches off the stools. By the end of the month Negus would lie quietly, draped around Damoo's neck.

It is not my purpose to make heroes of these trainers by pointing up the melodrama which is inherent in their profession, but too often in the public mind the amount of patience and study and understanding that goes into training wild animals is underestimated. Another common belief is that the animals have an organ removed, certain teeth pulled, or other mysterious operations performed to make them gentle. This is utter nonsense. Other people think that the animals behave because the trainer whips the tar out of them. If the people who make these accusations would stop to think for one moment, they would realize that if the whip were used to slash the animal, his fur and his skin would hardly be as smooth and unblemished as it invariably is. Every crack of the whip is a cue in the act. One unaccustomed move, and a trainer can be in serious trouble from the feeling of insecurity this might bring to his animals.

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Some years ago, Damoo trained a black panther to attack him as part of the act. At a certain signal, the animal would snarl at Damoo and, as Damoo would step backward from her, the panther would leap and slash out at him with her claws. Time and again, I have seen the panther snatch the necklace from around Damoo's neck, so close to him did her claw come. Menaka (pronounced "Men-yak-a"), the panther, was a very quick animal. Yet Damoo could be successful with this kind of trick because he himself is even quicker and has perfect physical control. He somehow always managed to keep an inch or two from Menaka's reach.

When Damoo went into the army, another trainer took over the act. The new trainer was a very competent, highly intelligent woman. The first time she performed this trick with the panther everything went well until the point at which she wanted the animal to stop leaping and go back to her pedestal. Damoo had accomplished this by stopping in his tracks and thrusting his head out at Menaka. The woman trainer was not entirely familiar with Menaka and wasn't quite sure of her. Instead of stopping absolutely still, probably afraid that the animal might try another leap, she took still another step back. But this was exactly the wrong thing to do: Menaka knew this as the cue to jump and she mauled her badly.

In a mixed group, all the natural jungle enemies are expected not only to sit quietly as neighbors, but actually to come in close contact with each other during many of the tricks. A mixed-group trainer has to be good, but even so is sometimes attacked; so complete absence of fear on the part of these trainers is something that never fails to amaze me.

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For myself, I can't claim to be thoroughly unconcerned when working on a wild animal. On the occasions when it was necessary to work on an animal that was not restrained and not unconscious, I have had a strange feeling in the pit of my stomach and the symptoms of what might be water on the knee. But the trainers dare not be afraid. In rare cases where the trainer has had reason to become so, he usually has found it expedient to change his profession.

Damoo is thoroughly aware of all the dangers, but at the same time he has the kind of confidence in himself that makes him feel master of whatever emergency arises. Alfred Court had the same confidence. He lived to retire. Other trainers who have been in the business for many years expect to reach a ripe old age. Many are sure that, if they don't, it will be because of a little bug rather than a big animal.

Damoo has a beautiful spotted leopard named Sonya. At the close of his act, he drives the other animals out of the cage, throws his whip and stick away, and spreads out his arms to Sonya. She comes off her pedestal, stands up in front of Damoo, puts her forepaws around his neck, her chin on his shoulder, and together they walk across the cage.

I asked Damoo once whether, despite the fact that he and Sonya have been doing this trick for some ten years, there is a danger that she might turn on him. He said the danger is always present. There are some days when she is nervous or excited, and he knows that he cannot trust her.

"How, then," I asked him, "do you protect yourself when you do this trick?"

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“If you will watch me carefully,” said Damoo, “you will see that some days, on the days when Sonya is upset, I will hold my chin down close to my neck like this. You see,” he said, “if she wanted to attack me, it would be impossible for her to bite me in the neck. She would have to bite me in the shoulder and I would have a chance to fight her.”

If that makes your blood run cold, or brings duck bumps to your skin, you were not born to be an animal trainer. That is the stuff of which successful cat trainers are made. I don't believe what they have can be developed. We are either that way, or we are not.

Cat training is such a fascinating art I never miss a chance to watch one of the trainers working his animals, whether it is running through an old act or breaking them for new tricks. Since some of the best trainers in the world have worked and do work with the show, I have had a chance to study them all at close range.

There are two kinds of animal men. There is a world of difference between them, although the public usually is unaware of any distinction. The first group are the real trainers. They take raw animals out of the jungle, break them, teach them tricks, and perform with them. These are the men like Court, Dhotre, Proske, Clemens, Mathies, and a few others. Then there are the men who perform with animals already broken and trained. They simply repeat a given set of signals in order to make the animals perform. One of the most famous of all American “trainers” belonged to this group. He even went so far as to employ a man to train his animals for him. The Hagenbeck Zoo in Germany has for

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many years trained entire acts and then sold them to "trainers" who were actually mere performers.

It is an interesting fact that most cat trainers prefer to work with jungle-raised animals rather than with bottle-fed animals. The reason they give is that pet bottle-fed animals are pampered when they are babies and are seldom punished. By the time they get big enough to be dangerous, it is too late to start punishing them. They are so completely unafraid that even hitting them lightly, which is enough to bring a young wild animal under control, will only make them savage and bring on an attack. Trainers feel if they, themselves, raised an animal on a bottle, they would be sure to start disciplining it early so the animal would respect them and would respect their orders at a later date. But if the animal had been raised as is a pet, by the time it was six or eight months old it would be much more dangerous than a jungle-raised animal, because it would have no fear and would only become bitter if then punished for the first time.

There are many legends current about the experiences of animal trainers. One popular story which has been attributed to any number of trainers is about the man who was once attacked by one of his animals, one of the other animals then saving his life. I have asked a number of trainers about this unlikely story and have found none of them who will admit this has ever happened to him.

The closest any of them have come to it in actual experience is an incident in Damoo's life. He was once working with a group of lions, and one of the animals was extremely mean. Damoo had decided to take him out of the act. Before he got around to replacing him, the lion one night struck out



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at Damoo, ripped his arm badly, and, as Damoo stepped back, lunged at him. He knocked Damoo down, and then, Damoo says, another of his lions which happened to be directly behind him, leaped over his fallen body and landed on the attacking lion. The two lions started fighting. This gave Damoo a chance to bring both animals under control. However, he says there is no evidence that the second animal attacked the first as a means of defending the trainer. His own feeling, based on his knowledge of the nature of wild animals, is that the second animal became excited because the first one was fighting, and attacked simply out of excitement. There have been cases where this same instinct has operated to the detriment of the trainer, where the other animals became excited by the attacking one and all attacked the trainer. When this happens, the show has only one choice and that is to find a replacement for the trainer at the earliest possible date.

However, the act is usually all great fun for the audience, and there is evidence that the animals actually enjoy performing. The cat trainers no doubt get a certain satisfaction out of their difficult achievement. But as for me — the training ring is a nice place to visit but I'd hate to make a living in it.

## CHAPTER VII This Won't Hurt Much

MY PASSIONATE DISLIKE of dentistry started in veterinary school. One day an old Negro farmer brought a horse over to us and offered him for sale for one dollar. Some of the horses that these poor farmers bring in at the end of the season are old; some are very old. It had been many years since this horse had been very old. Only once since then have I seen anything so decrepit, and that was a horse that a farmer in Ohio tried to sell me as the circus was passing through.

Old as this horse was, the school bought him and the students embarked on a campaign to return him to health if not to youth. I volunteered to take over at his dentistry, because extraction is very easy in an old horse and I thought I would be getting away with something. I was.

He had two bad teeth in the back of his mouth. I removed my shirt and went to work with real enthusiasm, certain that I remembered all my lessons in dentistry. This was an easy job. The boys who were assigned to the rest of his anatomy were really going to have tough going.

Though I established some kind of school record for extracting two teeth in a minimum length of time, for the rest of my years in vet school, it was impossible to live down the

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fact that one of the teeth I pulled happened to be the wrong one.

Like most kids, I hated going to the dentist — maybe more than most kids, because I had to go more often than most. A dislike for dentists to start with, complicated by an experience of this kind in school, was not likely to increase my enthusiasm. Luckily, I have never had to do a great deal of dentistry: I check every horse's mouth once a year and quickly get any repairs out of the way. Only too often, however, dental jobs seem to come up with lions, elephants, and bears.

Back in my circus initiation period, we had an old lion named Samba. He was past his performing days and was living out his years in the menagerie. Never having done any dentistry on a wild animal, I somehow had the confident feeling that perhaps, if I lived a very good life, I would never have to. But Samba didn't know about my confidence and he wasn't a judge of how lives were lived. He was just an old lion having a lot of trouble eating.

The keeper called me over one day, to ask me to watch the way this lion fed. Samba would tear off a piece of meat savagely, and then chew, and chew, and chew. He seemed never to finish one bite of meat. I watched him for a while and then realized that apparently the meat was sticking back in his molars. It couldn't possibly stick there unless those teeth were in very bad shape. There was only one thing to do: check those teeth.

We ran Samba into a squeeze cage and gave him a small injection of Nembutal. (For a short operation like this, there was no point in keeping him asleep for eight or ten or twelve

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hours.) I gave him just enough Nembutal until he went down and his jaws were relaxed. For the next couple of hours he could do me no harm. This was all the time I needed to fix him up.

The menagerie superintendent helped me put him on the operating table to examine him. Two of his lower molars were very badly rotted. They were broken and so decayed they had almost caverns in them. Extracting a lion's tooth isn't too much different from extracting a human tooth. The gum is broken away from the tooth; the tooth is loosened, then extracted. The only difficulty is that the root of a lion's tooth extends into the gum for about an inch and a half and it is ticklish to make sure the entire tooth comes out without breaking off and leaving a splinter of root to cause future infection.

I took my time and worked with extreme care. This was my first case of jungle dentistry and I wanted it to be right. Once Samba awoke, I wouldn't be able to look at his mouth to check its condition each day. While working, I explained each step to the menagerie superintendent who, it seemed, had never witnessed any but the most routine work on any of his animals and was fascinated by this procedure. He asked questions continuously and I found that my answers helped clarify my own thinking, as well as his. We took the teeth out and packed the gums. After a few minutes we changed the packing. Meanwhile, it was a good chance to study the rest of Samba's mouth because this was all pretty new to me, too.

We both must have lost track of the time. That is the only way I can explain it. For, while I was pointing out something

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in the lion's mouth, his jaws, which had been hanging loose under the anesthetic, suddenly snapped closed. His head stirred slightly. We both reacted instantly. Grabbing him quickly, both pushing, we slid him back into the squeeze cage. Not ten seconds later, Samba was semiconscious. Luckily, so were we — and also dripping wet.

When Samba woke up, he was on a cheap drunk which is the normal result of taking Nembutal as an anesthetic. We put him back into his cage, and after staggering around for a while he lay down and went into a normal sleep. When he awoke he was not only eating normally, but was much healthier and active than he had been in months.

Considering the trouble they give otherwise, horses are not too prone to tooth trouble. Their teeth almost never decay. I have a rather obvious theory that it is because a horse's tooth is a very solid bone formation, not pulp coated with enamel, such as ours. As a result, tooth decay is almost nonexistent in horses.

Horses do have other tooth troubles. Blind tooth is not uncommon. This is a case of two alternate teeth growing so close together that the middle tooth has no room to come down. When it doesn't it simply grows backwards. The root pushes its way upward until it causes serious trouble.

The standard method for treating blind tooth is not particularly pretty but it works. You anesthetize the horse and cut right through the outer wall of his cheek to the bone, using an instrument that looks very much like a brace and bit, until you reach the root of the offending tooth. Then, with a little dental punch, you simply knock the tooth back into the mouth, and then pack the wound.

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It has always been interesting to me to note an animal's reaction to pain. Take the horse — this wound I have described is about the size of a quarter and extends from the outer wall of the cheek bone all the way through down into the mouth. I always pack it with iodoform; and every day until it is nearly healed, I change the packing and irrigate it. You would expect that the tissues would be sensitive, at least to some extent. Yet I can't recall a single case of a horse seeming to mind in the least this daily changing, irrigating, and even probing to determine the condition of the wound.

Extracting a horse's tooth becomes easier as the horse grows older. As a horse ages, his teeth become longer, and as they do, the root becomes shorter. Horses frequently have loose teeth. These are extremely easy to extract. They occasionally split their teeth, but this, too, causes no trouble except to the horse.

When a horse is having tooth trouble, often it isn't too obvious when you examine him. The teeth may look all right, but the animal may still be in pain. The simplest way of determining whether he has tooth trouble is to watch how he eats and also how he digests his food. If both functions are normal, the chances are that the horse's teeth are all right.

Once a year, I examine all the horses for rough teeth. One thing that happens regularly is that their upper molars develop jagged corners on the outside and their lower molars on the inside. These jagged points are painful as the horse chews his food. The treatment here is very simple: I simply prop his mouth open with an instrument made for the purpose and "float" his teeth. The float is an instrument which

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looks like a wood rasp; the operation is simply a matter of filing the teeth down until their points are dull.

I have seen dogs with beautiful inlays and very carefully designed fillings. My own hunch is that this is done largely for show, or perhaps for practice. Never in my experience has it been necessary to fill a dog's tooth. His teeth are either healthy or they are split or broken and have to be extracted.

Although elephants have teeth, they seldom cause trouble. An elephant has enormous molars. Each tooth is as big as the palm of a man's hand. I had to pull one once, but the tooth was very loose. Since my knees were precisely in the same condition, it was lucky that some careful tugging with a long-handled pair of extractors lifted the tooth effortlessly. I should not relish the job of pulling a tight molar, but thanks to elephant ingenuity and intelligence, I very likely may be spared: an elephant, when she is troubled by a tooth, will pull it herself. I have watched the operation and it is amazing. She puts her head down until she can grasp her foot chain in her mouth. Then, working the chain back to and under the offending tooth, she jerks her head back and knocks the tooth out. Sometimes she has to try several times before the tooth gives, but she keeps trying. There isn't as much crying and jumping as when a doctor, in all innocence, gently touches an ear.

Elephants' tusks cause continual trouble. We have found it desirable to saw off tusks, because elephants do fight; and when an elephant fights, she would be quite capable of ripping an opponent to shreds with those sharp tusks. But even though the tusk has been cut off, frequently an elephant

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will break what remains. The problem then is to apply a local anesthesia, then pick out as many fragments of the tusk as can be found in order to prevent infection.

The structure of an elephant's tusk is somewhat surprising to one who has never seen it before. That part growing outside the elephant's gum is, of course, solid ivory, as every grade school student knows. However, the part within the gum is hollow and the wall gets thinner and thinner as the tusk extends inward. This structure is similar to that of a cow's horn. My post-mortems on several elephants indicate the average length of the root of the tusk is about fifteen inches. The wall of the tusk at the very end is nearly as thin as an eggshell.

We had a Russian bear in an act. One day the trainer and his wife stopped me on the path to the hospital to ask me to take a look at the bear. He was eating poorly, they told me, and there were signs of wildness in what was otherwise a very gentle animal. (The "gentle" was theirs, not mine. Gentleness is something bears are not noted for. Intelligence, maybe. But not kindness.)

We walked into the cage. The trainer and his wife walked right in, purposefully, and I couldn't do anything but follow without making an issue of it. The trainer held the bear's head and his wife held the animal's mouth open. Then they looked at me and both assured me I could work unmolested and safely.

It was almost like a clown routine. I was more than a little doubtful. Although I have no particular ambition to be known as a hero, in a case like this I was being pressured, ob-



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viously, and it would have been embarrassing to show fear, especially when the others were so confident. So, I followed the crowd.

I looked into the bear's mouth; a tooth had been badly broken. The very jagged corner, pointed as sharply as a stiletto, was piercing his cheek every time he chewed. The cheek was bruised and infected. While the two of them talked to the bear, kept him calm and held him comparatively still, I got my float and, working very slowly with very short strokes, filed the jagged edges until the tooth was smooth. Then I poured sulfa on the sore cheek and all but ran.

Going into a bear's cage under any circumstances is not a pastime designed to encourage the maturing of one's life insurance policy — or even of oneself. Performing dentistry on a bear was doubly dangerous because I might have inadvertently hurt him and he might not have understood that it was for his own good. That this bear turned out to be as amenable as his trainers promised was very lucky for all of us. Walking out of the cage I remember telling myself that if I ever did such a damned fool thing again I would deserve what I got for it.

Although our animals get into innumerable accidents, the only tooth trouble that I can recall resulting from an accident happened on the road. We had a bareback act consisting of two horses, one following the other around the ring and very close behind him. Frequently, a bareback horse will develop a very sensitive nerve on his back. Sometimes this is caused by the rider's landing on the horse too hard,

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having slipped; and sometimes, it is just a weakness of the animal.

This first horse began developing a sensitive back with the result that every once in a while he would tend to kick. It was almost a reflex which at first was not very marked. Then one day, during a performance, he lashed out with both hind legs. He caught the Number Two horse in the mouth. The two front upper teeth were kicked out so cleanly there were no fragments of tooth left and the gums were hardly torn. (It would have been difficult to extract a tooth that neatly.)

I examined him immediately and admitted I couldn't have done a better job, myself. That sometimes happens in an accident, and the outcome here almost seemed miraculous: the horse was not harmed and the mishap caused him little future discomfort since front teeth are not very useful to our horses who are never turned out on grass where they have to use front teeth to pull with. But the nonmedical outcome was that this horse was too scared to follow any other horse thereafter. He was subsequently trained in another part of the act.

## CHAPTER VIII We Prepare to Travel

THE BUSIEST PLACE in the world is *not* a beehive. It is *not* found by watching the ways of an ant, nor is it an army preparing for invasion. The busiest place on earth is the grounds of a gigantic circus, two weeks before hitting the road for an eight-month season.

Everything seems to be happening at once, simply because everything *is* happening at once. Wagons are being built, painted, lettered, repaired, and repainted. Traveling cages are being overhauled, scraped, repainted, replaced, bolted, decorated. The railroad cars are pouring out of the machine shop. Electrical equipment and diesel generators, wires and fixtures, canvas and ropes and pulleys, rigging, training cages, whips, props, costumes, floats, buggies and decorations are being readied; and people are milling — fourteen hundred of them.

Everything appears to be pouring into the grounds at the same instant from all over the country and, in fact, from all over the world. But everything is assigned its place, its wagon, its car, its individual truck. Once on the road, nobody will have time to look for anything or answer questions. Even the smallest prop has a man in charge who knows exactly where to get it and exactly where to replace it. Every-

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thing is packed in precise order, and everything is unpacked each time just as precisely. Without that precision, the circus would collapse within a week.

The fourteen hundred people, many of them new, many unfamiliar with English, must be briefed, oriented, and instructed. The grounds are busy, too; every bit of personnel working furiously — trying on costumes, testing new rigging, working new props, touching up last-minute additions to performances, keeping the animals working and in tiptop practice.

It was completely fascinating to me that first year, but I always had the feeling that while I was standing around looking at something in awe, the animals were being neglected. Actually, people in charge of the animals always know where to find me and they have standing instructions to call at once if they need me.

I hadn't then explored the Ringling Brothers side show. It is one of those things that I never have gotten around to — the way my friends in New York City have never been to the top of the Empire State Building. But during that last period before going on the road in 1941, I saw enough of the side show to satisfy my curiosity for a long, long time.

I had spent all one day making minor repairs on the animals. I medicated a tiger's clawed tail, dosed three sick horses, dusted an elephant's inflamed cuticle. Time was running short and every animal man wanted his animals in perfect condition before the opening of the season. While everyone else was at supper, I was making use of the first

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lull of the day, packing my medicines and equipment, and making notes of still missing items.

A midget came by and asked me to come down to the area where the side-show performers were packing prior to going on the road. Once there, I found that the lady who was billed as a snake charmer was having trouble. Her boa constrictor, eighteen feet of him, hadn't eaten in over two months and she didn't want to take a chance on his dying of starvation just before taking him on the road. If he did, she could expect to suffer, if not die, of the same malady. She pointed out to me that snakes of that size eat very seldom at best, but a two-months fast gave her a little concern.

I didn't like snakes then and I don't like snakes now. I didn't know anything about them then, and I still don't want to know anything about them. All I knew was that they are very good things to watch from a distance and even better ones not to watch at all.

Recruiting three helpers to hold the snake's body tight, and with the snake charmer holding his head, I began to treat him as I would a horse. I went back to the hospital to get the stomach tube used on colts. I loitered back to the snake. I passed the tube down through the snake's mouth, then fed him a small quantity of a tonic that is used to stimulate a horse's appetite, followed by a quart of milk fortified with three raw eggs and some vitamin B<sub>1</sub>, spiced with the blood of a freshly killed chicken. It seemed like an awful lot of trouble to go to for a snake that at any moment might have decided to embrace one of us like a long-lost brother. But I was not being paid to exercise my prejudices and I suppose I experienced some degree of satisfaction, a few days

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later, when this lady came over to tell me her Sonny Boy had just swallowed a live rabbit and was now his old healthy self. I could barely restrain myself from jumping in the air, clicking my heels, and shouting, "Whoopee!" That was one patient I'd been planning to send a large GET WELL QUICK card.

I have never had to work on a snake again and would just as leave not ever have to. I am not particularly afraid of them; they have never done me any harm. I just don't like them.

A day or two later, while watching Alfred Court rehearse his act, I noticed he was bothered a good deal by an enormous black bear in his mixed group. When the animals had been put back in their cages after rehearsal, I asked him whether this bear had always been so hard to handle.

"No," he said, "as a matter of fact, when Maxie was a cub he was rather amenable. But for some unexplained reason, the older he gets, the meaner he gets; and at this point, even though he is beautifully trained, I am afraid that for safety's sake he may have to be dropped from the act."

I asked him whether he had ever thought of having the bear castrated.

"Yes," he said, "but I don't know . . . Would you recommend it? Sometimes it ruins an animal, doesn't it?"

"Well, I don't really know," I told him. "I have never castrated a bear. Sometimes it's bad for older members of the cat and dog families, in that it makes them fat and sluggish. But on horses it works successfully."

"I can't work him much longer the way he is," said Court. "Why don't we experiment to see what happens?"

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That afternoon we tied Maxie up. We didn't use a squeeze cage because bears can't be contained that way too readily. They are natural contortionists and have the ability to roll themselves up in a ball and maneuver in the smallest area. By throwing ropes over him from outside the cage, we managed to get him tied to the bars so I could anesthetize him.

Before injecting, I happened to mention to Alfred that I was using Nembutal and he was a little suspicious of it. He had never seen it used on a bear before, and he was wondering whether it might be dangerous. I told him that the only danger would be in giving him too much because there was no way of knowing how to figure how much he could take. However, since it was being injected, it could be given to him very slowly and as soon as he went down, I could stop the injection. Reluctantly, Alfred agreed and I injected the Nembutal in the vein of the front leg. It surprised me to see how little the bear took before going limp.

We both went into the cage, opened Maxie's mouth and found that his jaw hung loose. His eyes were completely relaxed. Then I realized that bears must carry an enormous amount of fat; the power of an anesthetic is based on the weight of an animal without fat. There was probably very little weight left in a bear when you subtracted the fat. I performed the castration, which, although it seems to horrify many people, is really a bloodless and very simple matter. Seldom does it take any more than a few seconds of actual work.

When Maxie after several hours regained consciousness from the Nembutal he was a little drunk but otherwise completely all right. His appetite was good. He did get fatter,

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but also gentler and more friendly, and Court went on using him satisfactorily for a good many years — until, in fact, the animal was too old to work. He never threatened the other animals. He never threatened Court. He became the kind of animal that trainers refer to as a “good boy.”

I had been conferring with the Norths about the problem of vaccinating all the horses. This had never been done in the circus before. It was a debatable process then and to some extent still is. In earlier years, the loss of horses on the road was always rather high. A good many died of shipping fever and occasionally from sleeping sickness. The latter is an epidemic — or rather two epidemics: there is one kind of sleeping sickness in the East and another variety in the West.

After a good deal of discussion, the Norths told me if I thought it would be well to vaccinate by all means to go ahead and do so. So I undertook what turned out to be a very lengthy, very expensive and very monotonous job, but one which proved its worth a thousand times over. I vaccinated every horse, every mule, and every pony for shipping fever and sleeping sickness.

Despite the controversy, I was very sure of myself, because down in Shreveport we used to handle a lot of polo ponies that were shipped from there to various points in the country. I knew that those which were shipped out without being vaccinated suffered a very high mortality rate, while the vaccinated horses nearly always arrived in good shape.

So now whenever there was a free hour or a free minute, and often when there wasn't, horses were being vaccinated.



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The cost was great in both vaccine and time, but during that year, and subsequent years, there was never a doubt as to the value of the work done.

During this period, I learned how circus animals were packed for shipment. Most of the horses had stalls in the horsecars, but the very large ones were tied to the inside of the car door instead. This was considered perfectly safe, because large horses, being sure-footed, held their ground well even on a rough ride and didn't need the support of the stalls in order to keep from falling down. Besides this, large horses are quieter than smaller ones.

The wild menagerie animals were packed in the individual cages in which they were exhibited, but wild performing animals had special cages in which they traveled. These were wagons on wheels, and were loaded onto flatcars and covered with canvas.

There were four complete railroad trains making up the shipment, with twenty to twenty-five cars in each section. The personnel travel in comfortable Pullmans. The elephants and horses travel in stock cars seventy feet long. All the rest of the show travels on flatcars. This makes for simple, easy packing and simple, easy unpacking. Wagons are simply pulled off flatcars, hitched together, and pulled up to the lot by our big Diesel trucks. They are then distributed about the lot according to plan, and the various men in charge take equipment out of each wagon and set it up; at night they pack it back into the same wagon; all wagons in turn are taken back to the siding and loaded onto the train.

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We had a big giraffe named Shorty. I had him measured once to find he stood fourteen feet, six inches tall. We used to joke about him, because it didn't seem that an animal like that could ever be packed for shipment. Yet he had been traveling for years. The answer is that the management had a list of all bridge and tunnel clearances for the entire tour. They could then pack Shorty to stand as high as the lowest clearance. A giraffe doesn't *have* to stand with his head straight up in the air. He isn't uncomfortable if his head and neck are pushed down almost to a forty-five degree angle, the angle at which a giraffe normally feeds.

One day we took Boston, another big giraffe, out of his pen to fit him for his car, when somehow or other he got away from us. The men told me that this was unusual for a giraffe. It has never happened since. Without pulling or tugging or being wild, he was suddenly loose — sailing through the air in that gravity-defying way giraffes have. Watching a giraffe run is one of the most amazing experiences one can have. A giraffe's running is, I am sure, a form of levitation. I don't know much about how the law of gravity applies, but giraffes seem to bounce on one foot every so often and for the rest of the time float through the air like a gas balloon or like a slow-motion picture.

While Boston was sailing his merry way, there were we on our flat feet trying to chase him. Suddenly he bounded toward one end of the circus grounds where there was an eight-foot wire fence — netted at the bottom, barbed on top. As he came near it, he stumbled into a shallow ditch and cut his neck open on the barbs at the top of the fence. Then he fell, his back in the ditch and all four feet in the air. This is

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probably the best thing that could have happened as far as treating him was concerned. As long as he had to hurt himself, I appreciated his doing it in that position. Seeing him there, helpless, his feet waving, I realized that as long as he was down, he couldn't pull himself up. While the other men tied his feet (from across the fence where they couldn't get kicked), I sent an assistant back to the hospital for some of my instruments. Then I climbed up on a big bale of hay which we had pulled over and went to work.

Boston had cut his neck clean across and rather deeply. I cleaned it out and sewed it up — and I never realized, until it was all over, that this probably could be ranked with the oddest operations of all time.

When I was a kid, our morning newspaper always used to carry an advertisement which featured the upper half of a giraffe and the caption, "If you had a neck as long as this fellow, and had a sore throat all the way down, Tonsiline would quickly relieve it." It has been a standing joke for years that a giraffe with a sore throat is something very funny. A giraffe with a cut throat, believe me, is no joke.

At that time, the circus carried fourteen camels. (We carry fewer now because the show is set up a little differently.) Very early one morning, while I was making my pre-breakfast rounds, I passed one of the camel pens. It was obvious even to a non-camel expert that the female was in season. I woke one of the boys and suggested he take the males out of the pen.

"Why?" he asked.

"I don't know much about camels," I told him, "but if

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they are like any other animal, those five males are going to bite and paw and fight each other until they won't be fit to show anywhere."

"Naw," said the boy, "leave them alone. You'll see."

What I saw was a revelation. The males in a quite orderly and accredited G.I. fashion formed a line. When the first male had his turn, he simply walked around to the end of the line. This went on for about two hours.

In every other respect but their sex lives, camels are not exemplary; I should be very happy to let somebody else treat the camels. They aren't the most dangerous animals in the show, but they are probably the hardest to work on, the most unpleasant to deal with, and the most unpopular with all animal men.

I was learning that basically most wild animals could be treated the way the big domestic animals are. The wild animal is medicated differently, his symptoms are different, his treatment may have to be experimental; but before anything is done on him, he must be restrained exactly like a horse or a cow or a pig or a bull. He is restrained for two reasons: so that he won't hurt himself and so that he won't hurt his handlers. Each wild animal is restrained in a different way. Cats are put in squeeze cages. Bears are roped to the bars of their cages. Horses are roped. Hippos' jaws are held apart with ropes.

But the camel has a weapon the others can envy. You lay a camel down, very much the way you do a cow. You slip one loop around his neck loosely so that it doesn't bind him, another loop around his body behind his forelegs, and another loop around him just in front of his hind legs. Then, standing

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behind the camel, you pull on the loose end of the rope. The loops tighten around his body, his head is forced back, and he folds up like a card table. You then hog-tie him, all four feet bound together. Theoretically, the work is then done quickly and safely, the animal untied, and everybody is happy. But he is a mean animal and the theory doesn't always hold. He also has a chronic case of acid stomach. Whenever he is a little annoyed, he will start spitting, and a camel can spit. Apparently, his stomach stores gallons and gallons of liquid. This may be nice and convenient on the desert, but it is hell in the circus.

The liquid, with its high acid content, he lets loose in a fine, strong spray for an incredibly long time. He indiscriminately covers anything and anyone in his range with the hot, burning acid. In addition to other unpleasant aspects, the odor is unimaginably vile. There are few items in animal medicine to be compared with being spat at by an annoyed camel.

Tex Copeland, a tough 220-pounder, is our front doorman. He likes animals and had offered to help me whenever I needed him. I took advantage of his invitation the first time I ever had to work on a camel. That experience should have learned him, as we used to say in school, but it didn't. He is still my most valuable volunteer.

On that night, about 10:00 P.M., a keeper called me to tell me a camel was acting colicky. I found she was too restless for me to try forcing a stomach tube down her throat. I tried to feed her some medicine in a capsule, but she was apparently in a good deal of pain and started to fight me. Since

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a camel's forepaws can do one a lot of damage, I decided that an injection to calm her down would be a good idea.

A couple of the keepers held the ropes while I laid her down and tied her up. Then I asked Tex to hold her head. Tex agreed willingly, never having worked on any animal but a horse before, and I moved to the rear of the camel and started to work.

I heard Tex start to yell. The keepers and I looked up and there was poor Tex holding that camel's head by the ears, as he was told to do, holding it tight so she couldn't dash it against the ground, ducking his own head low on his chest, his face screwed up, his eyes closed. He was absolutely covered with the contents of the camel's stomach. Tex was as nearly drowned as a man can be out of water. Minute by minute, this stuff came streaming out of the camel's mouth, and Tex got it all. It poured off him in all directions. He was kneeling in a puddle of it. His face was burning. But he couldn't move without letting the camel go.

It was funny in exactly the same way that someone slipping on a banana peel is funny; we were all helpless with laughter, knowing that it couldn't actually hurt Tex; it just felt awfully bad.

We are as careful about our breeding of camels as we are about all our other animals. We like to mate good animals to produce good offspring, but we try to prevent too much inbreeding. If we have a male camel whom we do not want to breed, we first try to trade him off to a zoo for an animal that

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can be used for breeding purposes. Sometimes this can't be done and so sometimes, if it is an animal we want to keep even though we don't want to breed him, we will castrate him, partly to keep him calm and partly to keep him from breeding. This is a difficult job, mainly because the camel is the most difficult of all animals to anesthetize.

The neck, where the vein runs close to the surface for an injection of Nembutal, is rippled with layers and layers of fat and wrinkles of skin. Getting a needle far enough in to the right spot would be hard even if the camel stood still; and as you have gathered, camels don't co-operate. This kind of camel causes plenty of irritation. A camel can be anesthetized and I have done it when necessary, but it is both difficult and unpleasant. I'd gladly walk a mile to keep from operating on a camel.

Llamas belong to the camel family, a fact which for me asserted itself on very short acquaintance. For the "spectacle," or parade, this first season, two llamas were to be led around the arena with lead ropes. I decided naively that the way to put halters on was to go into the llama pen and do as one does with a horse. While the pen boys stood there laughing, the two llamas chased me all over the pen. I was chastened and emerged unvictorious after being sprayed by both of them from head to foot.

Luckily, camels aren't subject to too many diseases. Their most common trouble is colic and as a general rule, with the assistance of two or three keepers, I can usually manage to put the animal's head back and pour enough of a colic mixture down his throat to fix him up. He doesn't like it — a

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camel doesn't like anything, as his facial expression suggests — but he will tolerate this procedure.

It was just before shipping time that year, too, that I applied psychology for the first time in the treatment of a wild animal. Rudolph Mathies, the famous tiger trainer, had a large female named Rossia in his act who needed some treatment for a mild infection.

The first time I treated her, I went to the cage with Mathies to try to get a rope around her and pull her over to the front of the cage so I could pack the infection with sulfa. She never took her eyes off Mathies — and she fought, to borrow a phrase, like a tiger. Usually the presence of the trainer's familiar face seems to give the animal confidence. Normally, I won't work on an animal unless the trainer is there. But I noticed that Rossia snarled continually at Mathies. Finally, I suggested that he go away and let me try alone with just the cage boy for help.

Mathies left and it was amazing how much more amenable Rossia was. I then learned, although she was a wonderful working animal, that she always carried a little chip on her shoulder. Though not a mean tiger, she was not one of the cats that Mathies could pat or go near or become too friendly with. She would do what she was told, and she would perform beautifully, but she never did it willingly. Apparently, unwillingness was the nature of that individual beast; apparently, also, she always suspected when Mathies came around that she was going to have to do something. So, catlike, her back would go up. Thereafter when treating Rossia, I invariably did it when Mathies wasn't there. I won't



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say she was a good patient, but at least she could be treated, both of us emerging in one, unblemished piece.

As we made final preparations to go on the road, I couldn't help thinking about the supreme carelessness of the thousands of visitors who came through our winter quarters every day. Our training and quartering went on normally, and visitors who wanted to visit the grounds were welcome to do so. They could see the animals in their quarters or, if there was any training or rehearsing going on, they were perfectly free to watch. It both startled and annoyed me to see what few precautions visitors took in handling the animals. People would walk up behind a horse and touch him very gently on the rear without speaking to him, and there is probably nothing more dangerous one can do to a horse. You must call to him first, so he knows you are there. You can walk up and pat him solidly then, you can slap him hard in greeting — but you daren't touch him softly, particularly without talking to him, because it startles him and his defense reaction is to kick. Why some of these people haven't had their heads kicked off, I don't know.

I have seen visitors crawl under the guard ropes when the cage boy wasn't looking and go right up to the bars of a cage in which was a tiger, leopard, or lion. They of course see the cage boys and the trainers do this; but you would suppose common sense would tell them that these men are familiar with the animals and know exactly what to watch for, and also are adept at moving quickly.

Apparently, a false impression exists in the public mind about circus animals. They see these animals in the show per-

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forming almost human and in some cases superhuman feats. Unconsciously, they reason that an animal with that skill and brains is not really wild; he probably really isn't an animal. He is some kind of super-species, or he couldn't be trained to act that way; and if he is some kind of super-species — a sort of giant house cat — and if he doesn't hurt the people whom they see handling him, then he won't hurt strangers. This impression is very wrong, as I have proved by telling how even the best trainers are sometimes scratched, bitten, frequently mauled, and occasionally killed by animals who know them well. There is no truer statement than Damoo Dhotre's: "You can never, never, never tame a wild animal." You can make him only a limited friend.

I wish more of the visitors to winter quarters would remember that our animals are real animals. They don't have music boxes inside or heads that slide off at night. They often bite.

Our preparations were now completed. My personal stuff was packed. I carried with me, in both my wagon and my hospital car, a duplication of all the medicines and all the equipment I had in winter quarters. A few horses and other animals were left behind, mostly those who wouldn't fit into the show that year or who weren't up to the trip. Most came along with us. My wagon, painted red and silver, was now my office on the lot during the day. In it I had a complete chest with medicines. I had a refrigerator in which was stored the bacterins, serums, vaccines, and the other drugs which had to be kept cold. I also had a couple of deck chairs, my costumes (because I had been asked to ride in the

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spectacles, to keep an eye on the animals), books and magazines, just in case there might be a few free minutes for reading during the day.

My hospital car was stocked with other drugs and a cot — this latter was for use only if there was a seriously sick animal with whom a groom or I had to ride all night, an animal that we couldn't leave alone for the twelve- or fifteen-hour travel period.

The general organization of the circus, in regard to the animal department, at any rate, seemed to me designed for the most efficient handling of the animals. Under the general manager and his assistant, there was first a manager for each group of animals. There was the menagerie superintendent, in charge of all the non-performing wild animals, and then there were the superintendents of the other departments — monkey, elephant, and so forth. Under each of these men were assistant superintendents, and all the cage boys and keepers who handled those animals. In charge of the performing animals were the trainers, each of whom had charge of his group, and under each of these were the cage boys who assisted them.

I was in complete charge of the horse division. Under me were the ring-stock superintendent, whose job it was to see that the horses were saddled and in the ring on time, and his two assistants. I had one boy for each three horses.

Each menagerie superintendent was completely responsible for his animals and it was his job to call me whenever anything needed to be done. I was given authority, not only to treat animals whose illness had been called to my attention, but to spot ailments independently and treat them as I saw

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fit; to superintend the sanitary devices in an animal house or animal enclosure; and also to dictate any changes or any alterations in the diet of any animal for reasons of health.

With a closely knit system like this, each person had both authority and responsibility; and neither then nor during any of the years since has there ever been the slightest friction between menagerie men, keepers, cage boys, trainers, myself, or any of my assistants. The operation has always worked informally and very non-militarily, but incredibly smoothly and efficiently, with each person in the exact spot he should be at a certain time.

I packed all my things in the stateroom in the train a few days before we actually went on the road. The adventure excited me so much that the night before we shipped out I lay awake the entire night, thinking.

The past four months had been the most eventful months in my life. I had taken on a responsibility which, looking back on it, seemed foolhardy. No angel would have trod this unexplored sawdust trail. The work was harder than any I had ever done before.

Strangely enough, I had regained completely the health I had lost in Shreveport. And in the four-month period I had learned more about people, animals, and animal medicine than in any similar amount of time before. If we had stayed on in winter quarters, I would have felt very confident of being able to carry on at least as well as I had started.

My experiments with sulfa drugs on Rossia and others were miraculously successful, and I realized that with these and other drugs soon to be released, it was becoming possible to treat wild animals which a short time before would have been shot.

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But the road was something new. Here I was separated from my animals for long traveling periods — for at least twelve hours out of each twenty-four. A lot of things could happen to an animal in twelve hours. We were packing the animals every night, moving a hundred to a hundred and fifty miles a night, unpacking in the morning, frequently in an entirely different climate. Perhaps the hay and the other feed would be different. Certainly the water would be different. The constant movement, the upset on the train, the long walks to and from the lot . . . how was all this going to affect the animals? How was it going to affect me and my treatment of them? It seemed to me that I no sooner had begun to meet one challenge than a whole new set of obstacles was thrown in my way again.

They told me many animals were lost in traveling on the road. I was warned that the five weeks we would spend in Madison Square Garden in New York City were the least popular of the tour with all circus people, and that the illness and mortality rate among the animals in New York, particularly the horses, was terrific. Not knowing why, there seemed nothing I could do to prevent this, but I was more than ever determined that I would do everything humanly possible. So far, I had done pretty well. I planned to give the job eight months more and at the end of that time take stock of myself and of my animals and then reckon the score.

There were some nice animals in the group. Rossia, the tiger, and I were getting on well. Damoo's star performing leopard Sonya and I were hitting it off famously. McClain's favorite elephant Ruthie and I were . . . yes, friends. I actually had some pretty good friends among the animals. And that helped.

## CHAPTER IX We Hit the Road

THAT ANYTHING as big and cumbersome as this circus could be moved intact even once was miracle enough for me — and it still is. That it can be moved every twenty-four hours and on a virtually split-second schedule is incredible.

The month of final rehearsals in Sarasota demonstrated the high degree of efficiency of the organization, but the moving and shipping problems still concerned me. By the time we were loaded and ready to leave Sarasota, I felt that my job was pretty well under control; but I still didn't dare expect it to stay that way during travel.

In the first of the four-section train is packed the cookhouse and its team. This is always the first unloaded and set up on the lot. It is the first torn down, even before the evening show goes on. I didn't realize until much later, when I was in the army, what an efficient job these men do. (I can imagine this job under army auspices. It would take three days to set up and serve dinner. The whole first day, eight colonels would stand around and shout.)

The menagerie also travels in the first section. The animals travel in their exhibition cage wagons and these are loaded directly on the flatcars. If the weather is cold or rainy the wagons are covered with canvas to keep the animals dry and

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warm. The working personnel attached to the menagerie and the cookhouse travel in personnel cars on this section.

Section Two of the train carries the big top. It also carries all the floats and wagons and props. The men who put up the big top and other tents travel on this section, as do the personnel of the prop department. This section also carries one car of working elephants, those who assist in putting up canvas.

Section Three contains all the horses, the performing elephants, the seat wagons, and all the handlers for the elephants and the horses.

Section Four contains all the rest of the circus personnel. Despite the enormous number of people the circus has to carry, the accommodations for personnel surprised me in their elaborateness. The stars and most married couples travel in specially built staterooms that are as convenient as any hotel room. And even the least conspicuous people in the company, the roustabouts, travel on similar cars, two men to a bunk, three bunks high. These are divided into two sections, some cars for men only and some for women.

I have sometimes heard talk of the "moral laxity" of the circus people. Now I am not unobservant — and I have never seen more highly proper behavior, nor a higher degree of both morals and personal ethics, than has been exhibited by all the members of my circus group.

I was of course particularly interested in the shipping cars for horses. A horse is extremely delicate, and he also has a very sensitive nervous system. All kinds of things can happen to him on the road and, in the past, nearly everything did.

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The horses are loaded in cars with slatted sides rather than solid ones. It isn't too necessary to keep them very warm because if several are packed together, they tend to provide warmth for each other. It is much more dangerous to keep them too warm and allow them to sweat. The slatted sides allow plenty of ventilation. If, however, the weather gets very cold, cold enough to be dangerous, we let down the rolls of canvas siding attached to each car; this keeps out the draft and the cold air.

The horses' cars are fitted with stalls, roomy enough not to cramp a horse, but snug enough to support him if the train stops suddenly or jerks. Every horse travels in his same car, in the same stall every night. He has the same mates both in the car and in the tent, since nothing upsets a horse more than a change of neighbors. (Living in a New York apartment house would drive a horse to drink.)

There are automatic feed troughs running through all the horse cars which can be operated by one man. The horses are fed only oats on the train and the oats are fed into this automatic trough at stated times. I don't approve of this particularly, because I would much rather see a horse with a lot of time to kill eating hay. Hay doesn't give him quite as much nourishment and it isn't as concentrated, but he can go on eating, munching and nibbling on it, for hours and hours. This having something to do keeps him content. It is sort of an equine version of smoking. Oats, on the other hand, are a rather concentrated food and once he has eaten as much as he should have, his feeding must be stopped. But hay on the train is a definite fire hazard, so there is no choice.

The horses are never watered on the train for reasons of



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obvious difficulty. However, when we have a long hop, we break it up periodically at convenient stops and simply stand by for two or three hours while the horses are unloaded, hayed, grained, watered, and given a chance to stretch.

We never carry much animal food with us from town to town. It is just one more item to load and ship and unload, and our space is carefully measured and strictly limited. Our advance men — we call them twenty-four-hour men — who travel a day ahead of the show have many jobs such as marking the route to the lot and arranging for any necessary accommodations for members of the troupe, and they also buy replenishments for any supplies that are running low. They order hay and feed for the animals in almost the exact quantity that will be necessary for that stand. Anything left over, and there never is very much, is left on the lot. They buy the vegetables and the “fox food” for the bears. They order the perishables that are fed to the people in the circus and they replenish our frozen-food locker with meat for the meat-eating animals.

We carry about ten thousand pounds of frozen meat for the animals. They consume this at the rate of about seven hundred pounds a day; our supply normally lasts for about twelve days. When the supply dwindles to about half, the twenty-four-hour men arrange to replenish the stock.

The meat-eating animals eat horsemeat exclusively. The men buy whole animals and we have our own butcher who does nothing but cut the meat and store it away. All the bones are taken out because most of the animal men I talk to agree that bones can be quite harmful and are unnecessary, provided the animal's diet is balanced. Since we always do this

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eliminating, we insure our animals against choking or piercing their insides. We cut the liver so that each animal gets a small piece daily, and this meat is sprinkled with mineral powder containing vitamins, calcium, and so on. We usually also put a generous supply of cod-liver oil on the meat; this is good for the animals and they all love it.

As a result of our variety of birds and beasts, we usually can use a complete animal, giving each the part that he likes best and that is best for him. The vultures are the ones who get the bones, with some meat.

I should like to make a point here about horsemeat. There are only two kinds of horses: those you have known personally and those you haven't. We invariably buy the carcasses for feeding. We never butcher one of our own animals that has died or has had to be killed. (This can't be justified on any practical basis. It is sheer sentimentality.) Also, our old performing horses are never sold or given away. We keep them on a pension until their health is too bad and they have to be put away. Down in winter quarters, we never sell the carcass of any animal that has died. We don't have a formal cemetery, but there is a big field off at the end of our property and whenever an animal dies we cart it off down there to bury it. On the road this is still desirable but thoroughly impractical. When one of our animals dies on the road, we simply phone a local tankage outfit to come and haul him away.

There are only two animals involving a major shipping problem. One is the giraffe and the other the hippopotamus.

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Whereas the normal animal wagon has a straight floor built across its axles, a giraffe wagon is underslung. It dips down below the axles and levels off six inches or so above the ground. This gives a little added height, and a giraffe can then be packed at about a forty-five- or fifty-degree angle. Boston, our fourteen-foot giraffe, was stored in a car low enough to go under all tunnels and bridges. But Shorty, who was taller, had to be packed so close that he rubbed his withers on the top of the car. He wasn't uncomfortable and he was entirely healthy, but the continual bruising made us feel that he might be much better left in Sarasota.

The hippopotamus problem is that a hippo must have water all the time or his skin gets very dry and scaly, develops sores and becomes itchy. Furthermore, hippos can't live for very long out of water; they can't carry their own weight around for long.

I know that most show people dream of playing New York. This is the aim of every performer of every kind — except one. Seasoned circus people hate it.

They had told me about this; in Sarasota most of the performers talked about how they dreaded the five-week stay in New York. It wasn't prejudice; circus people have few prejudices. It was a matter of weather, and weather is as vital to the circus as it is to a farmer.

The Ringling Brothers Circus hits New York in the first part of April when days are damp, rainy, snowy, sleety, foggy — frequently all at once and often for the entire five weeks. All this may not stay the postman from the swift com-

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pletion of his appointed rounds, but it definitely stays the circus performer's enthusiasm.

In New York, also, the circus always plays in Madison Square Garden and this presents difficulties the average on-looker never realizes. The circus rehearses for weeks and weeks in an open area exactly the size of the big top. Every bit of timing for entrances and exits, all the lining up of performers, floats, and animals for entrances is done on the basis of the area and the immense space outside the big top. Then, suddenly, we get to Madison Square Garden. There is virtually no backstage area in the Garden. Surrounding the arena on the outside is a very narrow corridor and this we have to substitute for the unlimited out-of-doors. Instead of being able to keep the animals just outside the tent entrance and lining them up in whatever way is convenient for us, in the Garden we must keep the animals in the basement. That means that an extremely difficult and intricate timing and signaling arrangement must be used, in order to see that each animal leaves his stall at exactly the right moment to reach the ramp leading upstairs and get up the ramp and over to the entrance door in time for his cue. Should a procession be held up and an animal kept waiting on the ramp, there is always danger of his becoming nervous, because of his standing on a steep incline.

The wind whistles around the ramp. It is damp outside and inside. The Garden is adequately steam-heated, but all the animals and all the people have just come from Florida where outside it is tropically warm. Here in New York they go from almost overheated quarters into damp, freezing weather. Then they come into the drafty Garden to the per-

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haps greater hazards of more steam heat. The basement is badly ventilated and always humid. In every engagement at the Garden, the performers get sick in great numbers; I was told that in all previous years the animals, also, had been in poor health and that a number of horses were always lost during the New York engagement.

We hit the Garden; the riggers went to work stringing up wires, nets, and pulleys for acrobats, for wireworkers and trapeze performers. All equipment normally attached to the four poles of the big top is strung up on a semipermanent basis in Madison Square Garden.

We then went into several days of rehearsal, in order to become as proficient in our timing in this setup as we had become under canvas.

The night before opening we had a dress rehearsal which lasted well into the following morning. The following evening we were to open.

Before there was time to wonder what kind of trouble might be likely, a half-hour before opening time Alfred Court came down to the basement where the animals were stored. He at once called: "Hey, Doc!"

Princess, one of his tigers, was acting strangely. He was pretty sure that somehow she had tackled a bone with her meat; she was vomiting blood and her gums were pale. He thought she might have swallowed the bone and he wondered what I could do about it. We both were keenly aware that a sharp bone could pierce her stomach and kill her.

The wild animal act is always the first act in the circus because it takes a little time to set up the cages and

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run the animals into them. Because the animal acts are first, the animals have to be ready to go into their cages early. Then at the opening whistle, the show can start literally with a bang.

“Doc,” Court said, “I’d like to run Princess into the cage and I wonder whether you’d come over and treat her there. Otherwise,” he said, “I won’t be able to work with you, and I’ll have to keep her out of the act.”

“Well,” I told him, “if there is any danger she has punctured the wall of her stomach or her intestine with a bone, the only thing I can do is give her an injection of thromboplastin. Will she hold still?”

“I think it will be all right,” said Court. “We will call her over to the bars. I will stand at her head. She is a very friendly tiger. I will talk to her and keep her attention on me and you see whether you can give her the injection without her jumping.”

I got my hypodermic syringe ready, and together we opened the cage door. Court stood half inside the open door. I stood beside him. He had his cage boy lift the bars of the chute and let Princess into the cage. As soon as she was in, she became excited at seeing me there. Any wild animal, even with a trainer present, will grow terribly excited at seeing a new person. A new motion, even a new prop in the cage, will upset him.

Court called her and as she came to him, he held out his hand and patted her face. He talked to her very quietly and made her sit down. He still stood inside the half-opened door, close enough to her to give confidence, but at the same time prepared to jump if he had to do so.

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Without looking at me he said, "Just stay where you are, Doc. Look unconcerned, but avoid any sudden movement." While I was trying my best to do so without for a moment taking my eyes from the tiger, Court knelt in front of her and patted her; then without looking at me he said, "I think you can try it now, Doc."

I took the paw from Court, without taking my eyes from Princess's face. Her attention was riveted on her master, who was caressing her with his voice. I got ready to stick the needle in.

During this period of perhaps five seconds, I not only recalled all the details and events of my past life, but all incidents and past conversations held with long-forgotten people in long-forgotten times, and lives that probably weren't even mine. I think, perhaps, the whole history of the world in every detail passed through my mind in those five seconds. A man doesn't like to admit to being frightened. He would much rather say, "Well, I was a little nervous but not really scared." I wish I could say the same. The only word, short of army language, that describes how scared I was is "stiff." Every joint felt frozen. I wondered whether I could land the needle without missing, and I wondered how really painless an injection is to a tiger.

I would soon know.

As Court gave me the signal and I jabbed the needle into Princess's vein, I also said a prayer. I expected momentarily that her entire body would spring and that the Norths would be out looking for a new veterinarian.

It is perhaps the greatest tribute you can pay to a man in his profession to say Alfred Court that day performed a

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greater miracle than any of his training feats. That tiger didn't budge. He talked to her continually. He patted her with his hands. He fed her little pieces of meat. The needle went into her vein and it came out. I backed away and started breathing again.

When it was all over, Court closed the cage door after me, signaled for the rest of the animals to be brought into the cage and locked himself in with Princess.

By now the house was full. The opening whistle sounded, the band struck up, and the circus officially opened a new season.

A certain animal doctor, just before that moment, was hoping fervently that he was not only opening but closing a new era in his life. No more animals in their cages, I was telling myself; better a live coward than a dead hero. It was several hours before we knew we had been successful in curing Princess and it was certainly a relief to learn that we had.

My whole attitude changed from the moment that band struck up. All the old charm of the circus, which somehow I had forgotten during my long hours of gruelling work in Florida, returned. Suddenly, the animals made a circus again, not just a job. Here were the spirited music and the prancing horses, the uninhibited colors, the dashing spangled costumes, the splash of lights, the sawdust, the smell of peanuts and popcorn, and more than anything else, the thick atmosphere of excitement emanating from thousands and thousands of members of the audience.

This was the circus the way it was when I was a kid. This



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was the way the circus would always be. It was a spell to which I would never become immune, regardless of how much drudgery or hard work or long hours my job entailed. Whatever the hardships involved in being connected with it, this was the circus; and it was pure magic.

I was thirty-two years old; old enough, one might say, to know better. I hoped then that I would never know any better; and now, ten years later, I still don't, and I still don't want to. I am one of those perennial fans — like Father Sullivan of Boston, who pops up during a season at least a dozen times and is considered our unofficial chaplain by all denominations. Or like Freddie Benham, who spends a great deal of his time running the Circus Saints and Sinners which he founded as a fund-raising organization for destitute circus workers. Or like countless others who follow our show and other shows step by step around the country.

After the first performance, I went down to the basement again and carefully examined all my horses. They were in good shape; none were colicky; none had colds. I was just leaving when a mare named Helen, one of the liberty horses, was, I noticed, completely covered with enormous welts. I had never seen anything like this on an animal, not even on a horse. I had one of the boys spread some salve on her and they went down a bit, but I felt even at the time this wouldn't do much permanent good. I had to find out what those welts were.

The next day, I watched Helen very carefully before the matinee performance. I found that, about a half-hour before the performance when the horses were being costumed and

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powdered and groomed, she began getting excited. When the time came for her to go into the arena, she became more and more tense. I watched her perform and then I noticed that when she came out of the ring she was very calm but covered with more welts. I laughed as I have never laughed before. An animal's ailments are usually not very funny, but this was a neurotic horse. This was a prima donna with stage fright.

Before the evening performance I fed her antihistamines just an hour before show time and again watched her. This time her nervousness was much less marked and she came out of the ring with just a few small welts. I again gave her antihistamines and they went away. I did this every show time for several days, gradually reducing the doses; and at the end of about two weeks, Helen stopped getting stage fright. She had become an old trouper.

It was during this period in the Garden that I started a habit which I have never yet broken. Every time any horse or horses go into the arena, I always go in with them. I stand at the side of the arena and watch them as they perform, because I know that once a horse has a well-developed injury or ailment, he is very hard to treat on the road. I started this thinking that if I could spot weaknesses before they developed, I would have a much better chance; and this is exactly the way it worked out.

At one performance in Buffalo, I noticed a horse accidentally kick lightly the leg of a horse running next to him. That horse didn't show any sign of pain or limp, but because I knew he had been kicked, I began treating the very minor surface injury. Within a couple of days there was no more injury there.

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Otherwise, this horse might have become lame before there was any indication that there had been an injury.

Another time, I saw a horse just barely scrape his hoof on the ring curb. There was no reason here to think there would be an injury, but to play safe I kept that horse's foot tightly bandaged so that if there was the beginning of a ligament or muscle strain, the tight bandage would serve as a splint which was taken off only during show time.

I can multiply instances like this by the hundreds, and I believe that the few minutes spent in the arena each time the horses go in has not only saved the lives of many horses but has probably saved me countless hours of work and aggravation.

In recent years I not only have been going into the arena when the horses are on, but also have ridden in some of the acts. This has nothing to do with veterinary medicine. It is simply that I would rather ride a horse on any pretext at all than do practically anything else in the world.

During our entire first week in the Garden, it was snowing and sleeting. I watched the animals very carefully, the horses particularly. Whenever I found the slightest symptom of a cold, fever, or loss of appetite, I immediately dosed the horse with sulfa and with aspirin, sixty grains (or about six times the adult dose) to a feeding. I found that whenever the horses have a temperature, pain with no harmful effects, or colds, and nothing terribly serious is indicated, aspirin works just as well on them as it does on humans. I have also used anti-histamine tablets for years on horses with colds, with pretty good results.

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Toward the end of the New York run, we had the first in a series of accidents that I was to see repeated in different forms on many occasions. They are unavoidable, but I have never grown used to them.

This was a Saturday matinee. Alfred Court was running through his mixed-cat act. He had tigers, lions, bears, leopards, and great Danes, performing together in one cage. He also had a very rare performing animal, a snow leopard. Snow leopards are magnificent: they come from Siberia and are slightly larger than spotted leopards, with longer, fluffier fur. Their coat is almost dead-white; it is marked as is a spotted leopard's, but with smaller spots. They are beautiful animals, hard to capture and difficult to train. Alfred Court's was one of the very few I ever heard of.

In one of those incidents that happen when you have a lot of animals together, the snow leopard was crossing in front of a tiger on his way to his pedestal when the tiger, with no warning, lashed out, knocked him down and bit him. Court drove the tiger off and the snow leopard went back to his pedestal. But the minute the act was over and the animals had been driven out, Court called me; but by the time we got to the snow leopard he was dead. The tiger had injured him badly and had caused an internal hemorrhage.

Court had been watching him carefully during the rest of the act and realized that he was getting weaker and weaker. He had thought perhaps we might do something about him, but by the time he was out of the cage it was too late.

This is one of the hazards of the profession but it is the

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sort of thing you never get used to. Unrestrained jungle savagery, when you see it in the raw, is a terrifying thing.

I learned a good deal more about the circus and I learned a good deal about animals during those five weeks.

I examined my horses at least twice a day. I would go around and feel their temperatures between their thighs. This is usually the easiest place to notice the first sign of warmth, and unless I thought they had a fever I didn't take their temperatures with a thermometer.

I left New York a happy man. We didn't lose a single horse on that stand. We left New York for two weeks in the Boston Garden. (Here conditions were much improved. The enormous area of the building enabled us to keep our animals on the same floor as the arena — much less drafty than a basement. And the large backstage area made it an easy matter to line up our animals right outside the entrance door to the arena.) Then we set off on a tour of the entire nation.

From here on out we were to play under canvas. There were disadvantages sometimes to this, too, because they told me there were times when the field was so muddy that the wagons would be mired up to their axles, and often so muddy that a rider couldn't stay on a horse. There would be times when a horse couldn't run. However, when you are playing in a tent, this is taken in stride. The performers have a hard time, but they are good sports, and the audience gets a terrific kick out of it all.

It promised to be one big adventure — and now it was starting.

## CHAPTER X Under the Big Top

**F**OR THE NEXT TWO YEARS I was on a merry-go-round. It hung on a center pole planted deep in the heart of America. Its signal bell operated from Sarasota and its horses swung wide — from New York to San Francisco, from Bangor to San Antonio. There were no brass rings and no free rides. I worked hard for seven days every week. With all its difficulties and hardships, I enjoyed it thoroughly. And there were difficulties.

We had just set up on the lot, one day in Western Massachusetts, when Rudolph Mathies came running over to my wagon — which has always been Number 136; one of many small red-and-silver wagons that you see scattered on the circus lot. Some of them are used for props and equipment; some of them are the daytime homes of the circus personnel. My wagon not only provides a breathing space between jobs, but it is also my office. It is furnished with two small deck chairs and a couple of canvas chairs and a table. I can read or write letters or entertain friends. The entire back of the wagon is open. There is a small flight of wooden steps coming down and it faces directly ahead about fifty yards into the performers' entrance of the big top.

On either side of my wagon are the horse tents in which

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are quartered all the performing horses, the work horses, and the many deadheads that we carry. Deadheads are the horses that aren't used in the show but which could be used. Some are trained, some are trainable. They are all horses that can be used at a moment's notice should anything happen to the regular performers.

It was about noon and the show was in the process of being set up. Many of the performers had just come up from the train in the circus bus and were over in the cookhouse eating. But Mathies was disturbed.

"Rossia is not acting too well," he said. "Would you come look at her?"

Together we walked over to the far side of the big top outside the menagerie tent where the performing animals had been parked in their wagons. Rossia was usually a nervous animal, but today as we approached her cage she lay listlessly, looking at us. Her eyes had a gray film over them. Her nose was dry. I was reasonably sure she had pneumonia.

She watched us carefully and I knew that an attempt to rope her would agitate her so much that even if we succeeded she would have used up a lot of the energy she needed in order to keep her resistance up. There was no time to run her into the squeeze cage, because we were approaching the minute for the start of the matinee performance. Crowds of people were already milling about the grounds. We stood there and talked to her until she settled down against the bars of the cage near us and lay there. Mathies's cage boy put his hand through the bars to touch her. She scarcely turned her head. She was a very sick tiger.

I put one end of a rope in and as it circled her paw, she

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jumped. I was confirmed in my feeling that roping would do her more harm than good. I went back to my wagon, filled my syringe with an appropriate dose of sulfa and went back to Rossia's wagon.

While Mathies's cage boy stood at her head and talked to her, I stood next to him. Reaching between the bars I made a pass at her with the needle. She opened her mouth to growl at me and I squirted the sulfa into it. I repeated this until she had swallowed a sufficient dose.

Next morning I went to see her as soon as we got to the lot. She had been resting very comfortably all the previous day. She was still a sick animal, but she was so much improved that it was impossible to treat her through the bars any longer without first roping her. She was strong enough now so that we could rope her. She fought somewhat, but she had some strength to use up now. Within three or four days, she was feeling perfectly all right and was back in the act.

Eddie was one of our younger trainers. He was about twenty-five years old. He claimed he had wanted to be an animal trainer all his life. He had been taken to the circus for the first time at the age of four or five, and had decided then that he had to train animals. It was his one ambition. This is not uncommon with little boys; but by the time they are in high school they usually have equally strong passions in turn for the lives of firemen, policemen, ambulance drivers, aviators, railroad engineers, horseback riders, lawyers, doctors, and teachers. Eddie had never wanted to be anything but an animal trainer.

As soon as he got out of high school, he got a job with the



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circus as a cage boy. He cleaned cages, fed the animals, and in general assisted the trainer. Alfred Court finally took him on as an apprentice.

The boy loved his work and was developing into a pretty good trainer. He lacked only one quality: caution. He was so fond of the animals that it seemed impossible for him to convince himself that they were anything but his friends.

One day, during the evening performance of our first day in Pittsburgh, Eddie was in the cage with a small mixed group. He turned his back on a lion for a moment, without that keen awareness that most trainers have at all times of the mood of the animal. It happened in a flash. The lion swung his paw, knocked him down, jumped on him, and clawed him almost to ribbons.

Then there ensued a remarkable example of courage. Alfred Court, who wasn't performing at that particular time, was watching all three rings. All were being run by Court employees. As soon as the boy was knocked down, Court dashed into the arena, grabbed a short stick from a cage boy, and rushed into the cage, closing the door behind him. He went up behind the lion and hit him hard across the shoulders. The lion lifted his head savagely and turned on Court. Court backed him up and the lion sprang at him. Court jumped aside and the lion ran into and knocked over one section of the cage. Court hit the lion once more, hard enough to drive him back to his pedestal.

Then Court went over to the section of the cage, picked it up and wired it in tightly. He then ran over to Eddie and dragged him out of the cage so that first-aid attendants, who

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by that time had arrived with a stretcher, could take him away. Then, as calmly as if nothing had happened, Court picked up the whip which the boy had dropped and continued the act. By the time it was over, the attacking lion had been brought under such perfect control that Court was able to work with him from just two or three feet away.

This is the stuff of which good animal trainers are made. It is one thing to give signals and directions to a group of animals who are friendly and amenable and under perfect control, but it is something else again to regain control when the jungle has entered the ring. Sometimes the jungle does assert itself and it spells doom for any but the most expert trainers.

Eddie recovered after a long hospitalization, but he never worked with another animal.

We heard a good deal for awhile about the sad state of New York City's water supply and its desperate need of rainfall. I wish it were possible for the circus to transport its all too plentiful supply of rainfall during the season to New York for whatever use the mayor or the city council would like to make of it.

Rain is the great bane of the circus. It comes unexpectedly and it comes in torrents, always at the wrong time. It cripples performances and makes the work of the riggers and the roustabouts almost impossibly difficult.

Canvas tops are waterproof, but water seeps in between the laced sections and drips down inside. Our big top has collected so much water in a pocket that it has sagged with the weight of hundreds of gallons of water. I have seen that

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water collect to the point where it would burst through and literally drench everybody sitting underneath. When things like that happen and the audience stays for the rest of the show you realize what good sports most people are.

There are times when we have ridden up from the railroad to find the lot one continuous sea of mud. How the men go about setting up the poles and parking the wagons, even though they sink up to their hubs in mire, is one of the not so minor miracles of American industry; for a circus the size of ours is an industry. The men who drive the caterpillars work with amazing skill, getting wagons into position and pulling canvas tops up. The elephants chip in too, and each hauls a rope as the big top rises.

When the weather is bad there are always numbers that have to be cut from the performance. The spectacles suffer, because even though the arena is bedded with straw, the heavier floats sink into the mud and push the straw along in front of them until a mountain of straw prevents further passage. The wireworkers suffer, because their wires are continually getting wet from the dripping canvas above them. It isn't unusual to see a wireworker doing his act with men in front and behind him wiping the wire before and after. Some of the riding acts have to be stopped.

We had an act for several years performed by a very famous horseman named Justina Loyal. Justina had a small horse who galloped around inside the ring almost as fast as any race horse. Justina would run after the horse, jump on him and then ride him on one foot, at the same time pretending to be losing his balance and to be about to fall off. This act was always cut if the ring was muddy because it

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was impossible for a horse to run that fast in a muddy ring without falling.

Our circus performers invariably represent the height of their profession and their specialty. Every one of them has a hundred tricks he can do for every one he actually does. And so, when the weather prevents a particular performer from doing a particular trick, he is always able to substitute something else which can be done regardless of rain and mud.

Once we had real tent trouble. We were leaving Fort Worth, Texas, and had rolled up the big top, packed it and taken it to the train. The next day when the two canvas big-top trucks were rolled up to the lot and the eighteen sections of big top were taken out and unrolled, everybody stared in amazement. Thousands and thousands of crickets had gotten into it before it was rolled up, and what crickets do to fabric might well teach a postgraduate lesson to any moth you ever saw. This particular piece of canvas looked as though a student Swiss-cheese manufacturer had been doing his homework on it. It had holes the size of a quarter and it was literally covered with them.

We had only three or four more weeks to go before the end of the season and there was no time to have a new big top made. So we simply performed with this one. Whenever it rained the audience sat, some with umbrellas and some with none, and got just as soaked as if there had been no canvas over them at all. In nice weather, they got sunburned.

I think probably that is one of the things that makes people love the circus — the uncertainty of what may happen not only to other people but to yourself; the fact that you have to rough it; that you never know what you may be called on

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to do. The circus probably retains its thrill because of all forms of civilized activity it is the only reservoir of true adventure left in our lives.

Dampness can also cause illness. The first time we hit into the sinus country around Philadelphia, my leopards all came down with sinus attacks. Leopards are probably more susceptible to sinus than other animals. The best treatment is to keep them away from work and let them rest. Most of the cats get rhinitis too, exactly the way humans do. They also get headaches and running noses and need lots of rest.

I found during my early days on the road a good deal of distemper among the cats, especially the leopards, the pumas, and the cheetahs. This has always been a difficult thing to treat.

Although I had been having a good deal of success with the sulfa drugs on some cats, others consistently refused to swallow it. I also suspected that we might be successful with a vaccine that is used with great success on domestic cats.

I experimented with this on two of our leopards and that led me to the conclusion that if they were all vaccinated, we would cut our distemper incidence down to almost the disappearance point. I did this on the road, vaccinating a few animals each day and it proved so successful that every cat in the show is now vaccinated. If there are young ones born in captivity, they are vaccinated at the age of six months. It has been years and years since we have had a case of distemper. By repeating the vaccination every two or three years, we have probably succeeded in eliminating this hazard entirely.

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The injuries due to fights in the ring are endless. The first time a tiger got badly cut up, I ran him into a squeeze cage, anesthetized him and sewed him up. It didn't take me long to learn that this was a waste of time, not only for the tiger but for me: no sooner was he back in his cage than he devoted his energies toward licking the sutures out of the wound or pulling them out with his claws. All the big cats have very hard, rough tongues and in the space of a couple of hours it was no trouble at all for the tiger to lick out every last suture he could reach.

I next got myself a high-pressure pump, similar to one used for spraying fruit trees, filled with a supply of antiseptic. I also got a duster for sulfa powder. Whenever an animal came out of the ring with a gash or a bruise, I got as close to his cage as possible and started pumping, sometimes covering his entire body with antiseptic. The cage boy would then dust the healing powder all around the wound.

The only animals that never fight in the ring are the elephants. I have had only one accident with an elephant in the ring. Sudan was performing one day, and although elephants are usually sure-footed, she lost her footing or slipped and fell off her tub. It wasn't much of a fall, because tubs for elephants are only two feet high; but she apparently landed in a peculiar way and ruptured her bladder, and she was dead before we realized that she had been badly hurt.

We were in the middle of the Dakotas one night in September when during a performance it started to rain. I have never seen rain like that except down home in Texas, where it was once so bad that we had to abandon our house to the

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storm and take refuge with our blankets on top of the nearest hill.

Here, everything was mired up to the axles and instead of one caterpillar pulling three wagons, three caterpillars were pulling one wagon. We were hours late getting to the railroad and just as we got there one of my big bay hackney horses dropped.

He was obviously colicky and I was determined to keep him on his feet. I got him up, led him three or four steps . . . He dropped again. I got him up again and as fast as I let him go, he dropped. I tried to give him a pill and he struck at me with his forefeet. The only way I could get a capsule down his throat was to tie his head down. I tied his head to the railroad track so he couldn't strike me, but before I could get the capsule ready for him, he broke his halter, got up and started running.

There were dozens of rough board, rickety bridges in the area and this crazy horse was determined to cross every one. You could never have led a horse across any of those bridges without his stumbling and breaking a leg. This horse galloped. Why he didn't go over the side or jump right through, why he didn't stumble and kill himself, I don't know. All I know is that I was almost hoping he would disappear over the side of one of those bridges. I don't think I could have been any madder. We were late. The night had been long and hard. I was drenched; the grooms who were helping me were drenched. Everything around us was muddy. We were muddy because of treating that horse. The horse himself was one solid sheet of mud and we were fed up.

Some of the boys raced after him, and one of the boys got

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a broken arm for his pains when the horse reared up and came down on him with both forelegs. But most of the boys were raised on farms and farmers don't stay in business long if they let their animals outwit them. They finally caught him and brought him back.

Again we tied his head and this time we did it so there was no chance of his getting away. We forced a capsule down his throat. Then we put a new halter and a new rope on him. He was quieter now, but I wanted to make sure that he didn't lie down until the gas was out of his system. I figured that I couldn't get any wetter than I was and I couldn't get any more disgusted than I was, so I walked him for an hour and then I went into the hospital car and stayed with him until five o'clock in the morning. At that time he seemed quiet. The colic had apparently left him. The section was about to move off and I went back to my stateroom in the hope that before it was time to go to the lot I could get at least some of the mud off me.

At times like this, one wonders whether traveling with the circus is such a good idea. Now there is no excitement, there is no adventure, the blood doesn't course through your veins. There is simply cold, wet, and mud; and struggles with stubborn animals that don't want to get well and don't want their lives saved anyhow. At times like this, you yearn, the way nobody else but a soldier in the field can yearn, for the routine and security of a nice steady everyday rut.

I discovered some interesting techniques during those early days which in the aggregate have made life a good deal easier for me. I have mentioned before that bears have



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to be wormed continually and that no matter how often you worm them there is always an occasion when you find a bear suffering from worms which you didn't think he had had time to collect.

The problem is to get the worming medicine down the bear's throat. You can't feed him a capsule the way you do a horse because he would probably take you as well as the capsule. You can't put the medicine on his food very well because he would probably refuse to eat it. So I worked out a little system that has saved a lot of time and trouble.

I put the worming medicine into a small capsule. Then I take a very small piece of meat, about two inches square, small enough so that the bear can swallow it in one gulp and isn't tempted to chew it. I cut a slit in the meat with a knife and then stretch this into a hole with my forefinger. Then I push the capsule into the hole and pull the meat over it. At first the bear would sniff around the meat and then nibble it tentatively. What usually happened was that a tooth pierced the capsule, he would get one taste of the medicine, and then wouldn't go near it any more.

Then I developed the technique of placing the meat in the cage very close to the bars. With a metal hook I would pull the meat away from the bear. As he would come close to it, I would pull it still farther away from him. Finally, his anger would get the better of him. When he was good and mad, I would take the hook away and let him pounce on the meat, which he would invariably swallow with one gulp. After about an hour I would go through the same procedure with a capsule containing the laxative that washes the strong poison out of his system.

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One of my biggest problems with the big cats is giving them injections. Anesthetics have to be put into the vein. It was always very hard to find a suitably large vein near the surface in a cat. I would have to grope in the paw with the needle and try several times before hitting the vein. Even though I was in no danger, since the cat would be in a squeeze cage, the animals would become irritated and fight, and when they fight they lose much-needed strength.

However, it seemed to me that since every other animal has a vein that a doctor can get at, there should be no reason why nature would so construct the cats that they wouldn't have one too. Then one day on the road, we lost a lion. He and another lion had a fight and this one was injured; he was bleeding internally so badly that it couldn't be stopped. When he died, I had him hauled down to the siding and performed a very rough post-mortem on him in an empty flat car while we were waiting for the train to go.

I had figured out that a cat should have a decent vein running near the surface of the tail. Skinning this lion, the first thing I did was to examine the tail. Sure enough, there was a beautiful, big vein running right down to the end. This simplified matters a great deal — because ever since then, whenever I have had to anesthetize one of the big cats, I simply get hold of his tail and the needle goes into the vein without any groping. If the animal is very wild, I still put him in a squeeze cage before grabbing his tail. Frequently it is possible, however, to rope an animal around the shoulders and hold him close against the bars while the cage boy pulls the tail out and I put the needle into the tail. There is virtu-

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ally no pain connected with that; a lion will fight much more against being touched or tied than against being given an injection. I found out very early in my career that when I gave a dog or a horse an injection without any preliminaries, they would invariably jump; but they were jumping not because of pain but because they were startled at being touched without any warning. It is obvious that when you go up to a horse and touch him, he will jump and probably kick, though if you go up and talk to him and hit him hard or pat him with a good deal of force he won't move a muscle. There is a certain security in a good hard pat that is lacking in a light, uncertain touch; the latter strikes terror into the hearts of most animals.

This knowledge developed into a new injection technique which I now use for all the animals except the cats.

I never walk up to them and simply stick a needle into them. I first unscrew the needle from the syringe. Holding it between the first two fingers of my right hand, pointing upward, not toward the palm, I walk up to the animal and talk to him. I pat him five or six times with palm of my hand. Then on the sixth or seventh pat I turn my hand around so that the needle points at him and jab the needle in. There is never a flinch; there is never even the movement of a muscle. Then, quickly, I take the syringe which is in my left hand, screw it into the base of the needle and give the injection. The animals don't react when it is given that way. They don't seem to know anything is happening. There can be absolutely no doubt about the fact that, having felt several hard pats and having had the reassurance of the patting, they have no other feeling at all. I use this technique on

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horses, elephants, and on all other animals that don't have to be tied up or restrained before an injection.

My troubles during my first couple of years acted as reliable guides and omens. They told me exactly what I might expect in the future — a little bit of everything: from sick and injured horses to tigers who got pneumonia. (I found that sulfa often worked; later penicillin proved even better.

Betty Lou, our chocolate-loving pygmy hippo, whom we lead around on a leash, used to cut her feet continually, but sulfa ointment and neatsfoot oil always healed her up.

When elephants developed scaly skin, as did rhinoceroses, a floor mop soaked in oil always brought them around if cage boys had enough patience to keep mopping them with it.

A puma had his tail chewed up by a leopard during an act. There is a bone that runs through to the end of the tail and I operated the way one would operate on a leg, putting the tail in a plaster cast; that fixed it perfectly.

A horse was hit by an automobile which had skidded in the rain while we were leading the animals back to the train. While several of the grooms held umbrellas over us, I anesthetized the horse and sewed him up. I became so adept at this sort of operating, under an umbrella in the rain by the light of five or six flashlights, that I often thought the very ease of a well-equipped animal hospital, with lights and temperature and humidity controlled, might so bore a doctor that his vigilance would relax.

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There was also that first year a giraffe whose mane began shedding. He lost his appetite and developed a cough. Giraffes are always extremely expensive animals, and they are also very hard to handle. When I tried to get near this one he all but pawed me. I tried to take his temperature and, suffice it to say, he convinced me in short order that he was not to be temperatured. We tried to tempt him by his favorite food with medicine concealed in it. To no avail. He finally died. A post-mortem revealed that he had died of TB, which is not, strangely enough, a rare disease among giraffes.

We had an eland, a kind of African antelope, who was so anxious to get from one cage to another while we were transferring him that he dashed headlong against the end of the new cage, broke his neck, and died instantly. There is very little you can do in a case like that.

Damoo called me one day and said that Champion, one of his big leopards, refused to eat. Iron can't be put on a cat's food to stimulate his appetite because then he won't eat the food. Strychnine is a wonderful tonic for a horse, but it is much too dangerous to use on a cat.

I threw a live chicken into his cage, which is a technique that usually works on cats. Their hunting instinct stirs and they chase and kill the animal. That excites them enough to develop their appetite. But Champion just lay there and watched the chicken walk back and forth as though they both had come out of the same egg.

It was Damoo who suggested what proved to be the answer. We got a second chicken, killed it, drained its blood instantly and handed the warm blood to Champion. He swallowed it in one gulp, and that stimulated him enough so

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that he went after the other chicken in his cage, killed it and ate it. Then we were able to feed him his regular meat, which we had soaked with vitamin B, liver extract, and virtually every medicine and tonic which is capable of increasing the appetite.

I also learned a good deal about psychology on the road.

A horse named Boots went on hunger strikes. He had no obvious ailment; he simply refused to eat. He had once been particularly fond of both carrots and sugar; now I would stand in front of him with a carrot in one hand and a piece of sugar in the other and he would watch me listlessly till I walked to the horse next to him and fed him the carrot. Then I would walk by again and feed the horse on the other side of Boots the sugar. Then I would walk near him again with another carrot. I would hold it up, let him take one nibble, and then walk away and give it to another animal. Pretty soon, he would get the idea; when I came near him he would make a grab at whatever was in my hand.

I remembered much that an old Irishman in school named Owen Garrigan had taught me. He was probably the best horse handler in the Southwest. He was an expert at devising psychological tricks, and it has always struck me that a man who knows animals as well as he did would be a perfect instructor for parents. Imagine how much more sense some system like that carrot-and-sugar act would make with a child who didn't want to eat than standing around red-faced, storming, coaxy or threatening, doing everything possible to kill the child's appetite.

Garrigan used to have a system when he was breeding a

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jackass. A jackass is notoriously slow to cover a female. He will stand around for hours before showing the slightest interest and a farmer who is interested in breeding that particular animal doesn't usually have hours to waste. Garrigan would bring the jackass into the pen with the female. He would back the female up to the jackass and then take the jackass and attempt to pull him out of the pen. As they would get to the gate, the jackass would pull back again and stand near the female. Again Garrigan would start pulling him out, until finally the animal would get the idea that his time was limited and this man was trying to take him away. Just to show who was boss, the jackass would then yank himself free and go after the female. With this little trick, Garrigan told me, he could accomplish in fifteen or twenty minutes what would usually take a farmer three or four hours.

I have mentioned that strychnine as a tonic proved a lifesaver to me in treating my horses. A deadly poison, it is nevertheless part of almost every horse tonic, and in moderate quantities a fine stimulant for horses. However, once I made a mistake.

I was mixing a batch of tonic and apparently didn't shake it too well because the first pony I gave it to suddenly stiffened. I clapped my hands and he threw his head back and trembled. I touched him under the chin and he rolled his eyes back. Obviously to me it meant strychnine poisoning.

There are two choices in a case like that. The animal can be given a sedative or if he got a light dose he can be taken to a place that is very quiet, where he won't hear any noise, and where he can let it gradually wear off. In this particular case we were on the circus lot. I didn't want to give him a

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sedative because he wouldn't have been able to walk to the train himself and truck space is always limited when we're coming off the lot. I had two of the grooms lead him to the far end of the lot and keep him quiet. By the time we were ready to go to the train the effects were nearly out of his system, but not quite. What was normally a quiet, droopy pony walked to the train with his head thrown back, his tail up, his legs lifted high, prancing for all the world like a high-school horse. He looked like a merry-go-round pony. This was a joy to behold, but a headache to the groom: he not only walked with his head up and his forelegs up, but he made a determined effort to mount every female on the way to the train.

All in all, it was a strange two years to fall into from the quiet of the country. From a horse-and-cow practice to a tiger-and-elephant clinic is a long jump. I realized I was lucky to have emerged with an unbroken neck.

Well, I certainly had a general practice now. And all went well during those two years, until the exception.

We had had one tragedy, of the sort that one reads about but can't imagine happening to oneself. It happened to me — and I still remember it in every detail.



## CHAPTER XI Three Minutes in Cleveland

SOMETIMES a man can look back on a period of time when life has seemed to float. Nothing new has happened. Time has elapsed, but there was no time. . . . And sometimes one can point to some one event that happened almost in a mind's flash — and that left an indelible imprint like the impact of a meteor on the earth's crust.

During my first year on the road such an event occurred. It came from out of nowhere. It was over almost before it started. Yet my attitude toward all animals underwent a marked change.

It happened in Cleveland, when for three minutes time stood still. . . .

Today, the canvas used in the big top and all the other tents is flameproof. You can play a blowtorch on it and burn a hole clear through at the point where the flame hits, but you cannot start a fire. It is proof against both carelessness and maliciousness. But back in 1942, this was not the case.

The morning of August 4 was sunny and soft. A wet breeze drifted in lazily from Lake Erie. I turned over in bed and rubbed my eyes. I felt slightly groggy: the dampness wasn't making my sinuses any better. I looked at my wrist watch.

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It was 11:30 A.M. It was nice sleeping in a bed in a hotel room. This hadn't happened since New York in April.

Cleveland was a five-day stand. We played under canvas on the lake front, and I stayed two blocks away in a hotel in order to be near the grounds. This was the morning of the second day.

I sat up and looked out the window. Quite by accident, I had been given a room with a window overlooking the circus grounds. I dressed, drank some coffee which I had had sent up to my room, and stood staring idly out of the window trying to see whether I could identify the units on the lot from this height.

The two wings over on the end — that was the horse tent. The small units were the dressing tents. The other tents were easy: the big top with its four poles; over next to that . . . The game ended abruptly.

As I looked, without comprehending, an enormous light seemed to go on. A sheet of fire filled the sky, and as it sank low after its first surge, I realized that it came from the menagerie tent and that it was fire.

I flew from the hotel to the grounds. I have no recollection of going down in the elevator, crossing streets, walking or running. I just know that almost in a matter of seconds I arrived at the grounds. But there was no menagerie tent left.

There were charred and falling poles. There were smoldering remnants of burned canvas on the ground. Blackened ends of rope dangled helplessly, dripping sparks. And in the burning cages and smoldering straw, there were hundreds of writhing and burning animals.

There had been a flash fire, lasting for perhaps one minute

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and burning itself out in three. In that time, all the canvas in the menagerie tent was consumed. In that tent had been elephants, zebras, camels, llamas, guanacos, elands, some large birds, and all the other non-performing wild animals such as bears, lions, tigers, pumas, leopards, and panthers. The performing animals were always kept elsewhere in special cages. The horses, too, were kept separately some distance away.

Crowds of people were staring fascinated, but at a safe distance. The men already had things under control. Our own fire department was putting out the smoldering straw in the menagerie tent, and spraying the remains of the canvas, and the canvas of all the adjoining tents. The grooms were untying all the horses in the horse tents and they were being driven off to the far end of the grounds, where casual on-lookers and passers-by were holding them until such time as we were ready to claim them.

The fire was over. But the results were just beginning. I stared for a moment at the animals in the menagerie tent, and it was the worst sight I have ever seen. The elephants were seared and in many cases their burnt flesh was peeling off in two-by-four-foot sheets. Their ears, being thin, were fried almost completely off in many cases. The zebras were wild with fear and running in circles, many of them burning as they ran. The caged animals were in many cases beyond help.

The boys were already leading out of the menagerie tent every animal they could get their hands on.

The zebras were so wild they couldn't be handled. They ran in circles until they fell. The elephants couldn't be moved

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until Walter McClain arrived. When he arrived he shouted an order. At this point each elephant reached his trunk down, pulled up his stake, and in perfect formation they grabbed one another's tails with their trunks and marched out.

The camels were refusing to move. They lay down, staring off into space like old men looking out of a club window, and died.

One giraffe was running, but two simply refused to budge until led. By the time the boys got to them it was apparent that they were too badly burned to be saved.

So there were several hundred of my animals, all in various stages of being burned, and requiring immediate treatment.

I kept in my wagon a preparation called Foille. I had never had to use it before in the circus, except for rope burns, but I knew it was good for more serious burns as well. I heated it to thin it out, loaded my sprayer with it, and went to work on the caged animals. I sprayed them indiscriminately. I didn't know what it would do to their eyes, but I didn't have time to care. I had to cover them with this stuff to ease the pain and help heal the burns.

Often when I got to an animal I would realize that he could not be saved. I borrowed a police officer's revolver and put away those badly burned animals on the spot; it was, I thought, the most merciful thing I could do.

When there was a chance of saving one, I sprayed him with Foille and medicated him as best I could — and watched. If he seemed to be getting worse later that day or the next day, I put him away too.

We put ladders up against the elephants and I sent men up with paint brushes and buckets of Foille with instructions

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to paint the animals from tail to trunk without missing a spot. We managed to save all but four; these four were tough ones who never followed instructions and who had refused to leave the tent.

Eddie, our star giraffe who had raced out of her pen, managed to hurdle the fence and not only escaped the worst part of the fire, but also managed to escape us. She was away for four hours, during which time, after hurdling a stone wall, she half-ran and half-stumbled down a steep rocky embankment to the lake front where we found her hours later, bruised and scratched and battered, but otherwise none the worse for her experience.

The straw in the wild animal cages had caught fire and most of them had cooked. I went down the line and shot them. We ran caterpillars into the tent and hitched chains around those animals which refused to move. In that way we did save some of the camels.

One of the burning poles in the menagerie tent had toppled over onto the canvas of the horse tent, but by that time most of the horses had been led out and our own fire department put the fire out immediately.

Within a couple of hours, passers-by were leading horses back into the grounds. Some had picked them up on lawns as far as a mile away where the horses had wandered and stopped to have a little fresh grass.

The Cleveland police had come in probably the shortest time on record. Fast as I had arrived on the grounds, vans of police were on the spot, and within minutes had everything under control.

There were no people hurt, because those few who were

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wandering around the grounds had had a chance to get away.

All that day and all the next, we were spraying animals, painting them, and when necessary shooting them. The latter was a last resort; any animal that showed any chance of recovery was, of course, saved. Many of the elephants were so badly burned that liquid was pouring from their mouths and trunks. It is this dehydration that causes death from burns.

When it was all over our count stood at 65 animals lost: 4 elephants, 13 camels, 12 zebras, 1 ostrich, 2 giraffes, 4 lions, 3 tigers, 3 pumas, 16 monkeys, 4 Pinzgauer horses, 2 black bucks, and 1 sacred cow (white zebu).

The police department wanted us to cancel the evening performance. (The afternoon performance, of course, had been canceled automatically because we were all busy taking care of the animals.) It was the feeling of the department that since the performing animals were only a few yards from the fire, they would be too excitable and there might be trouble that night. We convinced the police department that we would watch carefully for any danger signs and halt the performance if we saw any. But we did proceed with the performance and we had as big a house that night as we have ever had. Every seat was full. Thousands and thousands of people were turned away. But more remarkable than that, there wasn't one sign of nervousness in any of the performing animals, either the wild animals or the horses. There were no mishaps, no accidents.

This, I think, is the answer to those people who claim that

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the circus is cruel to its animals by making them perform; that shipping them constantly keeps them in a state of poor health. If an animal is in poor health there are two ways that one can notice it: he has a poor appetite and he is either highly nervous or very sluggish. If our animals had been in anything but first-rate nervous and physical condition, there would have been a shambles that night. The fact that those animals were completely unaffected by the excitement, the smells and the noises of the afternoon is incontrovertible proof of the state of their health. There need never be another answer to the busybodies who, trying to find an outlet for their own sadism, indulge in irresponsible accusations of cruelty.

Most of the survivors of that fire are with us today. Some, such as the elephants, are performing animals; some are show or work animals. But it would be almost impossible for anyone but a veterinarian to examine them and tell which were with us and which weren't. Even though every one of the survivors was seriously burned, there is no noticeable scar on any one of them today. We always, as a matter of course, take extreme care in treating any of our animals for whatever ailment or mishap, but we outdid ourselves with the animals caught in that fire.

I didn't sleep for three nights because of the attention the animals required. Many of the keepers stayed up likewise. We wanted to be sure that the curable ones were cured as well and as quickly as possible, and that the incurable ones were put out of their misery as soon as we gave them up.

I was more affected by this than by anything I had witnessed with animals before. Not just because of the tragedy

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or the mass suffering. There was another reason: despite the number of animals involved, the horror of the scene, the shouting of the men, the general excitement, the smoke and the noise, the heat and the pain and the sickening odors, there was never from the beginning to the end of that fire one single solitary sound from an animal. There was just a dead silence. It was one of the most touching and one of the most awful things, for that reason, that I have ever experienced.

I knew then that there is something in animal make-up akin to greatness in men. It is not just their size or their swiftness; their fierceness or their power. There is an inner nobility and a kinship to what is enduring in nature. In that moment, I learned to respect animals in a way I never had before. Familiarity, when it is forced on one in crisis, can breed tremendous respect.



CHAPTER XII    On Again, Off Again,  
Gone Again

ANIMALS, like humans, like attention; and like us they are creatures of habit. Recognition of these two traits avoids all the hazards that might accrue from the constant shipping of the animals. We get them used to travel at an early age. We give each of them a great deal of time and personal attention on the road.

So to people curious to know how we ship so many varied and often sensitive animals from climate to climate and from area to area without either spreading infections of our own to these areas or picking up local infections, our answer is relatively simple. We fortify them against climatic changes by keeping them healthy. We work in very close co-operation with all the official local and state veterinarians to prevent the spread of any infection. Our advance agents keep in touch with these state veterinarians, and we are warned of any dangerous diseases in an area we are about to enter. We then either change our plans, skip a showing, or vaccinate our animals.

As soon as we enter a state, I always get in touch with the state veterinarian and invite him to examine my charges. In many cases, I call his attention to ailments in one animal or another which he ought to know about, just for the record.

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One shady or underhanded act on our part would ruin our reputation for the rest of time. On the other hand, no one who cares about animals wants to see any animal ill, even one belonging to someone else. Because of this close cooperation, there has never been any illness as a result of shipping our animals all over the country.

The horses may be said to suffer a little. Down in winter quarters when the animals aren't working too hard, we don't feed them Number 1 timothy, the finest grade of hay, because that would give them too much nourishment for the amount of work they are doing and they would become fat. However, the minute we hit the road, we make sure our horses and other hay-eating animals are fed nothing but Number 1 timothy. This they have at stands all along the way out to California. On the Coast, we can't get timothy, but we do get something called rolled-oat hay which is a first-grade hay. Sometimes because of this change of diet our horses will get a little colicky, and all our men are instructed when we hit California to watch for the first signs of colic. We treat it immediately and break up the sickness in its early stages.

We have a little trouble, too, passing through Texas — down there we have to use prairie hay instead of timothy. It is a harvesting of wild hay grown in the field, very nourishing and a very fine grade of hay, but different; so it causes colic in horses that aren't used to it.

Moldy hay is something we watch out for continually because if a horse doesn't reject such hay he may get a disease called botulism. This affects his brain and makes him appear intoxicated. I have known cases of botulism that have been treated fairly successfully, but the horse's brain is almost in-

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variably permanently affected. We have only had one case of it in the circus.

Whenever we pass through Texas, I usually try to arrange to leave the show for four or five days and visit my father's ranch for a brief rest. This is the only vacation I can possibly take, because as long as the animals are around I have to be there to watch them.

One year — it was the first time in three years — I left the show in Fort Worth, skipping the performances at Dallas and Waco. I had been at my father's place for two days when I received an urgent phone call to catch up with the show.

One of the big hackneys had botulism. I treated him for two days, giving him a series of injections, and he seemed to be coming around all right. The evening of the second day, he got a little worse and I took him to the train in a truck instead of having him walk. By the time we got to the train, he was a very sick horse and nothing could save him. I put him away on the spot.

Blackleg is a disease that has had me worried ever since I joined the show, but my worries apparently have been groundless. This is a serious ailment. Actually, it is an accumulation of gas under the leg, affecting cows. The animals almost never recover from it. Although we don't carry cows, as such, we do carry a good many members of the cow family and I thought it likely that they would be susceptible to blackleg. We try to avoid contamination in two ways. We keep these, as well as our other animals, particularly clean and well-groomed. This fact alone accounts for the absence of trouble we have had with the disease.

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I still have troubles.

Pat, for instance — a horse with a phobia. His outlook is very strange. He doesn't particularly mind being tied up, but two or three times a year he will pull back against his rope in his stall and dash his head against the front of the stall. When this happens, the boys bring him to me. I pull out a needle and go to work sewing up his head. I do it less willingly each time, because that performance on his part seems so inexcusably stupid and also because, being a fairly mean horse at heart, he will, I suspect, one of these days pull back from the needle and come dashing right into and over me.

The explanation for Pat is a mystery. The boys can't tie him to a car while waiting to load because he fights every inch of the way, but they can drop his reins and leave him standing there and he won't move two feet. He never fights in the stable, and apparently doesn't mind being tied; but every so often he simply rears back and goes dashing head-long into his stall.

When we were traveling through the Northwest one day, the menagerie superintendent came running to my wagon, between the matinee and evening performance, and announced breathlessly that he needed help: A black panther had stuck his paw a little too far out through the bars of his cage, and a jaguar in the next cage had grabbed it and bitten part of it off. The bones were sticking out and the foot was a mess.

I didn't want to take the time to run the animal into the squeeze cage because he was in pain and bleeding. So we

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threw a rope around the paw and while the boys held the paw straight out through the bars, I injected a local anesthetic and performed what remained to be done of an amputation. I bandaged it up heavily and tightly, and during the few days before the panther had chewed the entire bandage off the foot healed well enough to prevent any danger of infection.

This matter of infection after being clawed is a very serious one. Whenever a trainer is clawed by a cat he immediately treats himself, and whenever another animal is clawed I treat him as though he were already infected. The reason for this is that the members of the cat family, all except the cheetah, have retractable claws. They can spread them out for use as gaffs in fighting or they can curl them all the way up inside the pads of their feet — as does a house cat, but these claws are greater in proportion. Since the cats use their claws for holding their food, there are always tiny fragments of meat left on the claws. As the claws are retracted, I think these tiny particles may collect up in the pockets and decompose; so that the only unclean part of any cat is the claw.

One of my most heartbreaking experiences during my early trips with the show was with an animal called the inyala, very similar to the antelope. We were coming off a very muddy lot one evening and the wagon in which the inyala was traveling turned over. In trying to catch himself, he broke his foreleg. It was a bad break, a compound fracture with the bone sticking through the flesh.

I kept him on the lot and, since our electrical equipment never leaves until all the animals are off, I laid him on the

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floor of his wagon and performed an operation on him then and there.

I injected him with Nembutal and put a cast on his leg. I mixed plaster of Paris, stretching the leg tightly so that there was extremely good traction. I held him unconscious and motionless for thirty minutes to give the cast time to set thoroughly.

The leg was healing beautifully until an unfortunate accident two weeks later. We had a thirty-hour run. This is unusual, but up in the Northwest the population is spread out and it frequently happens. By the time we landed in California, there was no more inyala. As soon as we stopped, I went in the car to look at him and found that during the run, the animal had apparently fallen in his cage, probably as the result of being unable to keep his balance with the cast on his foot. He had split his pelvis and died.

The animal that takes up much of my time on the road is, strangely enough, the dog. Although there are few performing dogs in the circus, we do carry about seventy-five with us all the time. A few of these belong to the clowns and are used in their acts. A few perform in bareback acts and the occasional trained-dog acts. But it seems that almost every one of the prop boys, the cage boys, the trainers, the acrobats, and everybody connected with the show has at least one for a pet.

Because these people are so busy, the animals aren't watched too carefully and manage to get into all sorts of trouble; and whenever any animal with the show gets into trouble I follow him right in.

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One night, Virginia, one of the bareback riders, came to my tent with a little Boston terrier bitch. The bitch had been in labor for quite a while, but didn't seem to be making any progress. This is not uncommon among Boston terriers because this animal has a very big head and a very small pelvis.

Normally, performing a Caesarean on a dog is not particularly difficult. My trouble here was that I had no one to administer the ether, for that must be done by an expert. I could not use Nembutal, since that gets into the bloodstream and would have killed the puppies.

So I gave her morphine. This didn't make her unconscious, but it did put her in a sort of stupor. I cut her open. The first puppy I removed was dead, but the other two were very much alive and healthy. The mother, although conscious, lay quietly during the operation and didn't make any sign of pain or discomfort; and as soon as I had sewed her up, she was wandering around as though nothing had happened.

One of the things I should like to have happen someday is the performing of a Caesarean on one of the big cats. This may have been done before, but I should like the experience of doing it myself.

I am asked very often whether it isn't lucky that I never have to do anything for the hippopotamus. I think the size and the ugliness of this animal fools people a little bit. Actually, I don't anticipate that there would be any trouble at all in treating a Betty Lou. You would tie her up very much as you would a pig. You would put a rope around her upper jaw inside her big teeth and pull her up tight on a block and tackle. You would put a similar loop over her lower jaw and

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pull that tight to a pulley fixed in the floor or in the ground. With those two ropes held taut, the hippo would be helpless. I believe I could do practically anything to a hippo that can be done to another animal.

Toward the end of our run in 1943, we had a spell of bad luck. Several things happened at once. First, the assistant menagerie superintendent got too near a tiger's cage. The tiger reached out a paw, grabbed him, pulled him to the bars, and had mauled him very badly by the time the other boys managed to beat the tiger off.

Then another tiger grabbed for a boy who got under the protective rope and was too near the cage. In this case, the tiger grabbed the boy's arm, pulled it into the cage and had chewed the arm off before the boy could be wrenched loose.

It would be easy to say that this was the boy's fault, but when a thing like this happens, it is a tragedy and placing blame doesn't solve anything for anyone. It simply reminds us again that wild animals can't be trusted. "Let the spectator beware," might well be the circus slogan.

On our way south in the early fall we were in Atlanta when we fell heir to one of the experiences that elephant men always dread. A group of work elephants were busy on the lot when suddenly, for some reason — no one ever knows what the reason is — they stampeded. They did a lot of damage to things, but they didn't hurt anyone and the elephant men got most of them under control within a fairly short time.

But one of them, Judy, a particularly bad elephant, didn't



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stop. She kept right on going and cut a twelve-mile path of terror and destruction. People kept out of her way, but she went through gardens and hedges, through cars and wagons, through garages and walls.

Finally, she wound up in the yard of a woman who had never seen an elephant before. I heard that the local police department was phoned by a slightly hysterical female voice that said: "There is a very strange animal. I never saw anything like it before and he is in my yard and I want you to come and get him."

"What kind of an animal is it?" asked the officer.

"I've *no* idea," said the woman. "Something I have never seen anything like before!"

"Well, what's he doing in your yard?" asked the officer.

"He is uprooting all my flowers with his tail."

"And then," said the officer, "what does he do?"

"Oh . . . ," said the woman, "I'm afraid I can't tell you *that*."

At any rate, the police department phoned us and we sent a riot squad of elephant men who managed to get one end of a chain around Judy's leg and the other end around a big tree.

They then came back and got my "assistant" from the herd, Ruth, a very small elephant but a very tough one. They took Ruth along with them, chained Judy to her, and had Ruth lead her back to the lot.

For several weeks after that, they kept Judy chained to Ruth. This is an accepted practice. It is done partly because the calm, loyal elephant has a soothing effect on the runaway, and partly because the loyal elephant can punish the bigger

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one if she gets out of hand. In this case, it was very amusing. Whenever Judy would show signs of restlessness or irritability, Ruth would turn on her and thrash her unmercifully. Judy would start crying; whether you understand elephant language or not, you could tell she was pleading for mercy. At which point, Ruth would stop hitting her and go about her business until Judy showed signs of restlessness again.

Indeed, Ruth, though our smallest elephant, is our stand-by disciplinarian. She certainly knows her job. The boys threaten unwilling elephants with, "You want Ruth to come take care of you?"

One day, while we were marching from the train to the lot, a silly woman onlooker dashed into the street and tried to feed something to our pygmy elephant Emily. The suddenness of the motion so terrified the little elephant that she picked up her trunk and threw the woman into the crowd, both hurt and chastised . . . another example of the foolishness of approaching an animal without knowing something about it.

I am often asked whether a man who has known horses as long and as intimately as I have is in a better position than a layman for winning money on the races. To that, I can only answer that I have picked the winners of the Kentucky Derby for the last seven consecutive years. If you asked me how I did it, I could point to one of those years as a perfect example.

I studied the backgrounds, the sires, the forebears, the breeding farms, the trainers, and the riders for as far back as

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I could obtain records. I spent weeks studying and comparing these records in as scientific a manner as possible. The day before the race, I looked through all my charts. I very carefully read all the dopesheets. Then I handed the list of horses to my wife and I asked her which horse she thought would win. Martha looked down the list and said, "This is a very pretty name. Play this one." And so that was the one I bet on; and that one, as usual, came in first.

I think this is probably as scientific a way as any of playing the horses unless you have exact, *last-minute* information on every horse, every trainer, and every rider from every stable entering horses in the race. Since this is virtually impossible, I think the Mrs. Henderson system is probably as good as any.

CHAPTER XIII    **The Girl**  
on the Flying Trapeze

**T**HE GOOD OLD American dream of every small-town boy once was to run away and to achieve world-wide fame as a glamorous circus star, and then to marry the beautiful, spangle-bedecked girl who, smiling, lightly risked her pretty little neck high up in the air in a pink spotlight. It amuses me to think that the pattern of my life has to some degree followed that formula.

A small-town boy, I didn't exactly run away, except from myself, and I didn't achieve glamour, perhaps. But I was part of the circus. I never acquired world-wide fame or stardom. But as for the bespangled girl high up in the pink spotlight . . .

During my first year I became friendly with two of the greatest high-wire performers that ever lived. One was Karl Wallenda, head of the world-famous act which bore his name, and the other was his wife Helen.

Circus people work much harder than members of the public realize. The result of long hours of practice is that our social life is almost nonexistent except for one brief period each day: the two hours or so after the night show is over, back in the train in our staterooms while we are eating, calming down, and preparing to relax for the night. Between the

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dark and the daylight — that is the circus's social hour. That is when we have time to relax, be friendly, and dispense with professional worries until morning.

It was during one of these midnight sessions in the Wallenda stateroom, in October of 1942, that Karl mentioned a very good friend of his and Helen's who was to join the show next day. The friend was Karl's divorced wife. I had heard a good deal about Martha Wallenda from both Karl and Helen, because the friendship among those three was and is one of the very rare things in this world. Karl and Martha are the only two divorced people I know who are still sincerely fond of each other and respect each other. Simply, as a married couple things didn't work.

The next morning, Martha arrived and went to work for Ringling Brothers as an aerialist. She had worked for the Ringling show before. Coming to this country several years before as a kid of sixteen, she had worked for the Ringlings until 1938 when she left to tour with one of Karl Wallenda's other acts. Now she was back, and one look at her broke down my very firm resolve never again to become interested in another woman.

Night after night, the four of us would eat and talk in Karl's and Helen's stateroom and enjoy one of the warmest friendships that has ever existed in or out of the circus. Even today, now that the Wallendas as an act are no longer with Ringling Brothers, whenever we appear in the same town and in Sarasota where we are neighbors, we invariably spend all our free time together.

During this period, which lasted some two months, Martha never showed the slightest sign that I was anything but a

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handy fourth for conversation. I did my very best, and looking back on it I am afraid that that best was none too good, to indicate that I thought Martha pleasant company, but nothing more than that.

It was very difficult to make excuses to see Martha during the day, because she was busy and I was, too. If, during every free half-hour, I dashed over to see her, that, it seemed to me, would be incriminating. However, I reasoned, if I spent that free half-hour becoming sincerely interested in the technique of high-wire performance, I could hardly be accused of wooing the fair lady. Since high-wire performers have always been to me the most glamorous of all performers anywhere, I was not entirely insincere in my determination to walk the wire.

So, every day when I could manage the time, I appeared near the wire rigging and Karl's father, an old-timer on the high wire, would teach me the technique of wire walking. Thus, I not only managed to be near Martha for an additional few minutes each day, but I also became quite proficient on the high wire: within two weeks, I could do the chair trick, ten feet off the ground. This consists of walking out on the wire with a balancing pole in one hand and a chair in the other; then, by slow degrees, placing the chair on the wire, sitting on it; raising oneself on the rungs of the chair; and then placing the feet on the seat of the chair and rising to a standing position.

I also learned the bicycle trick, which consists of riding a two-wheeler across the wire with one, two or three girls on one's shoulders. I never progressed past one, but the one was Martha and any more than that would have been a crowd.

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I mention these details because, frankly, I am very proud of that minor accomplishment. Since, at the same time, I subtly managed to further my acquaintance with Martha, the operation was a huge success.

The first indication I had that Martha was interested in me was at one of those midnight sessions in the Wallenda's stateroom, but I didn't catch on. Martha and I had talked at some length when we met at the coffee stand on the lot that afternoon and later Martha had half-teasingly told Helen she was interested in a man with the show and that she had seen him that day at the "grease joint." Now Helen asked Martha, just at the moment Martha had her mouth full of coffee, who exactly she had seen that day. Martha was unable to answer so Helen turned to me and said, "Doc, did you see Martha there today?"

As I was in the process of saying "Uh-huh," there was a hissing sound from Martha's direction and a spurt of coffee came choking out of her mouth. That session broke up in acute embarrassment for everyone but me. I didn't know what it was all about until three months later.

For the next few days, all relationships were a little strained. Martha was embarrassed because she felt I must know her secret. I was embarrassed because Martha's attitude had become strained and I just wasn't smart enough to realize what was going on.

Then one night as Martha and I left the car where Karl and Helen had their stateroom, we stepped out into the pouring rain. A few feet from the door, the water was pouring along in a torrent. As I grabbed her arm to help her

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across I suppose some old Texas instinct, or maybe some memory of English history, asserted itself and I picked her up in my arms and carried her across the stream. I took her back to her car and, in something of a haze, walked back to my own.

About a week later we were in New Orleans and the four of us decided to go night-clubbing. We went to the Tip Toe. None of us were or are heavy drinkers, but in honor of the occasion, we had a drink apiece. I asked Martha to dance, and while we were dancing, I remembered a remark on Helen's part that Martha was interested in someone with the show. Fortified by that one drink, I said to her, "Martha, who is the man you have chosen?"

She looked up at me and whispered, "You, you dope." Back in Texas, a man could be ostracized and driven to Louisiana for showing too much emotion in public, but maybe because we were already in Louisiana, I figured I had nothing to lose.

We stopped dancing and somehow managed to paralyze the entire floor while I closed my arm around Martha right there in the middle of the Tip Toe Café in New Orleans.

During the next few evenings, the relationship during the midnight supper sessions seemed to me to be very strained again. The general atmosphere was cold and Martha would no longer let me walk back to the car with her. I stood this as long as I could. Finally, I felt that if the situation weren't clarified, I would have to leave the show. We had come to the end of the tour and I knew that once back in winter quarters I might not see Martha for weeks on end.



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We had just closed in Jacksonville and the train wouldn't move out until the next morning. I asked Martha if she would care to take a walk. She said, "No." I asked whether I could see her back to her car. "No," she repeated.

They say a Texan is composed of 90 per cent pride and 10 per cent love of open spaces. That 90 per cent fell away as a mist does before a stiff breeze. Martha has told me that I grabbed her arm as though I was fighting a stubborn horse. I remember pulling her around so that she faced me. Holding both her arms, the way I would hold a camel's forelegs, I think I did shake her slightly the way I do when impatient with a restless animal.

"Do you remember the night in New Orleans?" I asked her. She didn't answer but she nodded.

"Well," I asked, "have you forgotten?"

"No," she said, "but I thought you had."

Then we both knew. I will always remember Jacksonville because we walked up and down its streets, across town and back again, making our plans for the future.

As dawn was breaking, I brought Martha back to her car and I went back to mine. For weeks I hadn't slept because I couldn't. That night I didn't sleep because I didn't want to. There were too many other important things to do. Plan, for instance, and just dream.

We decided not to get married immediately because I knew that very shortly I would be called into the army. But we knew that whenever I came back, we would continue from Jacksonville.

In January of 1944, I was called for an examination. In

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February, I went into the army. Just two years later, I was released and on April 4, 1946, the day the show opened in Madison Square Garden in New York, Martha and I were married by a Justice of the Peace just before the opening performance.

## CHAPTER XIV    A Chance to Remember

I AM NOT A DREAMER by nature and my mind usually dwells on the thing that is about to happen rather than those things which already have happened.

But for one brief period in my life, this changed. When I got out of the army, very early in 1946, I went home to Kerrville to see my parents and to rest for a while. There was much made, at the end of the war, of the need for readjusting. The case was not being overstated. I was lucky: I wasn't actually mixed up in combat myself, although our unit was responsible for treating men in a combat area; I came back physically, mentally, and nervously in one piece. I probably had as easy a time of it as any man in the army. Nevertheless, just being in the army during the war is literally a shocking experience, particularly for a mature man. The readjustment to civilian life is a rather unnerving experience; I found it so, and I was not alone.

During the time I spent in Kerrville, I was trying to get back into the frame of mind which would enable me to pick up my life where I had left off. Many men used this intermission to change the entire courses of their lives. I knew only one thing: I wanted to marry Martha.

I also knew that I had thoroughly enjoyed my life with

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the circus. I hadn't particularly minded the traveling. I was wrapped up in my work with the animals and I had made some very satisfying human relationships. But I didn't know how domestic life and the circus would mix. I knew that there were many people with the show who had families. Some left them behind when they went on the road, others took them along. But the problems remained: there was no time for companionship; quarters were crowded. It wasn't a normal background for domestic bliss. Should I stay there?

Having an important decision to make and being at the same time in a fluid mental state, I found that my time at home was largely spent sitting and thinking. I engaged in practically no physical activity short of whittling. For the first time in my life events were not moving and driving me along at their pace. Nothing was moving. There were no events. Day after day I would sit on the porch of my father's ranch house, and stare across at the mountains and think back on my career's beginnings.

I really started on my present road when I entered Texas A. & M. Enrolled in the engineering school, as I have told you, I didn't like it at all and spent my free time training horses, to pay my way through college.

The dean of the school, Dr. R. P. Marsteller, had noticed my interest in horses during that year and it was his urging that made me finally switch from engineering to veterinary medicine.

During that first year of veterinary school, we tried to sell a decrepit mare named Astral Princess to a visitor who came to the school. His name was Tom Hogg. I remember

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how he laughed at me and told me that by the time I finished my course I would realize that nobody in his right mind would take a horse like that as a gift.

Tom Hogg, I found out, was a very wealthy rancher. He had one interest in life — horses. But his visit bothered me because I was not a greenhorn in the horse field and I knew that Astral Princess could be made into a good horse. Simply to justify my own self-confidence, I spent every hour I could spare during the next year training and reconditioning that mare. By the end of the year, she was a really beautiful five-gaited horse.

One day Hogg again visited the school and I arranged to bring the mare into his line of vision. I was riding her and she was going through her paces beautifully. So good was she that she had recently won a blue ribbon at one of the biggest county fairs in the state. When Hogg saw her, he came over to me. He, of course, did not remember her, and made no sign of remembering me.

“There is a horse I would like to buy,” he told me.

“Sorry,” I told him, “not for sale.”

“Why not?” he asked. “Isn’t she your horse?”

“She has already been sold,” I told him, “but you couldn’t buy her anyway.”

“Why not?” Hogg asked.

“Because,” I said, “you have already refused her.”

“Refused to buy that mare?” Hogg asked.

“Just one year ago we offered her to you and you laughed.” Hogg’s obvious surprise assured me that he didn’t recognize the horse.

This was the beginning of a friendship that has lasted

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through the years. Hogg spent most of his time on his ranch and he delighted in finding people who loved horses as he did. Having decided that I was one of these, he more or less adopted me.

He was a middle-sized, rough-hewn man whose rough talk masked a very sympathetic and extremely gentle nature. Regularly every three or four weeks, during all the time I was in college, I would receive a telegram saying, COME DOWN TO THE RANCH THIS WEEK END. Hogg would wire me fifty or sixty dollars for expenses and he and I would spend the entire week end looking at his horses and just sitting around and talking horses.

It wasn't unusual for Tom to awaken me at two or three in the morning and say, "Hendy, I just thought of a wonderful horse. Let's go and look at him." We would dress, pile in Tom's car and then travel through the night, as far as Oklahoma or Kansas or Missouri, to see some horse that Tom had heard about. When we would get there, usually we would find some fairly impossible nag and turn around and drive home again.

He was a wild, unpredictable character, but wonderful company and a perfect friend.

During that era, kidnapings were in vogue. This was in the time of the gangstress Bonny Parker. One day Tom received a telegram blank and on it was scribbled a demand for a thousand dollars. Tom told me about it when I arrived for the week end. He had ignored the demand, but I was a little nervous now because he had to drive into the hills on business.

I was sitting alone in the house after dark when suddenly a

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series of shots rang out in the hill just above the ranch. The shots ceased and a car driven at a terrific speed came down the road; instead of stopping at the tall gate which was part of the ranch's deer fence, it came right through the gate, carrying a piece of it on the hood.

Tom came into the house, he was dead-white and hopping mad. He had a clean bullet hole through the shoulder of his jacket; luckily, his person was not touched.

Several nights later, we looked out the window and saw a light moving in the corral about two hundred yards away. Tom pulled out his gun and started firing. The light disappeared, but we never found out whether or not we hit the person who was there.

Tom carried a regular arsenal in the house, and after the attack on him he armed all the servants and gave me a gun, too. It worried me a little because I felt that if I ever had to get out of bed in the middle of the night to go to the bathroom, Tom might very easily sit up in bed and start firing away in his sleep. I, therefore, did the only sensible thing. I so arranged my schedule that I would never risk the possibility of having to get out of bed in the middle of the night.

Tom was a quick-tempered man, and I remember once he became infuriated with a neighbor who had a mongrel stud in his pasture. Tom had about seventy-five purebred American saddle horses. He warned the neighbor to keep his stud away from his horses. When the neighbor ignored the warning and Tom one day found the stud in his pasture, he called me to get on a horse. Tom did likewise. We galloped down into the pasture.

Tom roped the stud, threw him down, and asked me to

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castrate him. I refused, pointing out that since I was a medical student it would be highly unethical for me to do such an operation, even though I had done several before entering school.

With a quick toss of his head, Tom reached in his pocket for his pen knife and, without any further ceremony, castrated the animal. The stud recovered without becoming infected, for one of those mysterious reasons that often makes fools of doctors.

In 1933 I developed an infection in my throat and the doctors thought it might be cancer. They suggested an operation. Tom approached the doctors and arranged to pay all the expenses of that operation. I was out of school for four months. The operation had been pronounced successful; however, it was in the middle of the semester, so I had decided that instead of going straight back to school I would spend the balance of that year working out of doors to build myself back up again.

I got a job with the Magnolia Oil Company in Refugio, Texas, working as a roustabout, and the physical work, fresh air, and regular hours soon put me back in condition. The following fall I went back to school.

Naturally, there was a good deal of work in school connected with horses, and this interested me because much of it I had done, or had seen done, in an amateur capacity on my father's ranch.

I didn't know much about mules until I went to college because I had had little experience with these very smart but very mean animals. It was interesting to note that the mules in that area fell into two classes. Those that had been raised



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by the Negroes were rather easy to handle because the Negroes broke them thoroughly when they were young. The others were very dangerous and very mean and, as one of our students discovered, you could be standing at the head of a very serene mule and the next minute find yourself kicked in the face by an animal who hadn't moved — except for a split second with one hind leg.

We did a good deal of operative work at school, most of this on animals which had been sold to us by owners who knew they were no good for anything any longer. When the first autumn cold weather would arrive, every day would see a virtual parade of farmers, many of them Negroes, leading their poor decrepit worked out animals down the road. We would buy them for a dollar or a dollar and a half. These were animals which in the normal course of events would have been killed. Occasionally we would find one that was basically sound and we would treat it and bring it back into condition. We had a number of fine horses which were acquired in this manner. When an animal was really too old to be of any use, the school would use it for demonstration purposes.

I want to make one thing very clear. There has been much criticism of veterinary schools among other institutions on the basis of their lack of humane treatment of animals. This is absolutely unfounded. No matter how badly off the animal was, it never suffered at school. It would be anesthetized. A demonstration operation would be performed and the animal would never be allowed to wake up if it was not a success. By doing this, instead of killing the animal outright which would have been common farm practice, there was

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no suffering on the part of that animal, yet because we students were allowed to witness and participate in these operations first hand, the lives of countless other animals would be saved. I have found that people who spend their time looking for signs of inhumane veterinarian treatment of animals usually operate without knowing the facts. From my observation, the animals are treated a great deal more humanely than are most human beings.

My greatest extracurricular interest during my school years was the prehistoric animal. Whenever time afforded, I would ride around the countryside in search of fossils. On two occasions I was very lucky. Once while fossil hunting with Dr. Mark Francis, who preceded Dr. Marsteller as dean of the veterinary school, I was traveling up the banks of the Navasota River. Looking down into the river bed, I found a large bone sticking out of the mud. We both went after it and dug it out and found that it was the shoulder blade of a prehistoric mastodon.

On another occasion while fishing in south Texas near Raferio, I found the tooth of a prehistoric horse. If ever I should find myself with a lot of free time outside of animal work, I believe I would devote most of it to hunting prehistoric animal remains, giving the rest of my time to carpentry. Short of working with animals, those are the two things in life which I enjoy most.

As my memory traveled back through those college years and those care-free days on Tom Hogg's ranch, I remembered a horse that the school owned named Calico King. She was just an ordinary saddle-bred mare, but she was the smartest

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horse I have ever known. I knew nothing about training horses to do tricks and yet by simply showing Calico King what I wanted her to do, and often by simply telling her, I had her performing as few other horses I have ever seen.

She would lift her foreleg and put it over her neck and then lift her head high in the air. She would lie on her back and let me stand with my two feet on her hind feet and support me in the air. In a very short time I taught her a dozen such tricks.

I showed her to Dr. Northway of the King Ranch one day and he was quite impressed. I don't think he realized how inexperienced I was or how smart was my pupil. A close friendship sprang up between Dr. Northway and me, and I used to visit the King Ranch frequently to watch him treating his thousands of head of cattle and his thousands of quarter-bred horses. Many people aren't aware that in addition to being one of the largest cattle ranches in the world, the King Ranch also trains and breeds race horses. Assault is one of Dr. Northway's horses, as is Middleground, both of them Kentucky Derby winners.

It was therefore a feather for my cap when sometime later, after I had started practicing in Shreveport, Dr. Northway sent a quarter-bred stallion to me and asked me whether I would train it for him because he was giving it to someone as a gift.

While my thoughts were on Calico King and on the stallion I trained for Dr. Northway, I naturally began comparing life in those days to my time in the circus.

A practicing veterinarian has no bed of roses. Unless he

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is in a fashionable residential area where his major job is doctoring nervous breakdowns in house cats and parlor dogs, he lives a rough life. He is called out at all times of the day and night and in all kinds of weather. His customers often aren't too well-to-do. They have a tendency not to call until the animal is nearly dead. In which case, the veterinarian has little to do but accept the blame for not being able to cure it.

The circus has one of the finest collections of animals in the world, if not the finest. The associations were pleasant. Working conditions were good, barring such natural obstacles as bad weather on the road. Furthermore, I had never got over the magic that is peculiar to the circus and I was stimulated by the challenge of the work, much of it original work, on the wide variety of animals. . . .

It was during this period of daydreaming that I realized that married or single I would never be as happy away from the circus as with it. Here I was, the only man in the country, perhaps, who had a chance to live in a veritable jungle without giving up the comforts of civilization.

By the time John Ringling North phoned me, my mind was already made up. I would go back to the circus. I packed immediately and joined the show in Sarasota in the midst of rehearsals for the 1946 season.

I think Martha and I would have regretted it all our lives if I had decided otherwise.

CHAPTER XV    We Changed  
a Leopard's Spots

ONE DAY RECENTLY I left the show to escort a shipment of giraffes and zebras to Sarasota. Normally, a break in the routine of endless travel would have been welcome. But not this time. For just the day before I had become a grandfather.

A letter from Martha followed me to the south:

Just came from seeing Sweetheart. Except during show time, I spend all my time with her and her three beautiful darlings. Such healthy pretty rascals! Sweetheart is the most affectionate mother — just one little sound from the babies and back she goes to see what they are doing. She kisses and caresses them morning, noon, and night. The doghouse you built in her cage for the cubs really works. It keeps the babies safe from prying eyes and so Sweetheart has shown no tendency to kill them. Sweetheart is so good. I try to keep other people away from her little box in the back of the cage. If someone goes by, she gets nervous; but when I am there she is so sweet. She leaves the box as if to say, You take care of them for me for a while. Then I arrange the babies and change their bedding.

Their eyes are half open, but already they crawl to me and I pet them and push them back. I love them all, but Sweetheart is still my baby, too.

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Hurry back. I won't name them until you are here. I don't know if they are male or female, for one thing. . . .

Just a week before this, Martha and I had walked into the menagerie tent when we were playing Westbury, Long Island. As we came through the door, a large female leopard in the cage labeled LEOPARD: AFRICA stopped her circling of the cage and pressed her nose against the bars. As we approached her cage, she stood up on her hind legs and reached her forepaws through the bars in friendship.

This is not an arbitrary word. Anyone who knows cats knows that when they are angry or when they plan to grab you, they extend their paws and reveal tremendously long claws. When they are calm and simply playful, their paws are closed and their claws retracted.

As we reached the cage, Martha ducked under the rope which keeps visitors from getting too close to the bars, and took the leopard's two paws in her hands. She pressed the leopard's paws against her face and reached her own hands into the cage and held the leopard's face between them. The leopard got her own face as far through the bars as possible and licked Martha's nose.

There were a good many people in the menagerie tent at this time and they watched us, some with amusement and some with sheer horror. They probably thought we were a couple of foolhardy animal lovers determined to have ourselves done in. What they didn't know was that this leopard was Sweetheart, and that Martha and I are her parents.

Sweetheart was born on New Year's Day in 1947. Cats do not breed to any great extent in captivity and leopards are

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among the most reluctant of all. I went out to winter quarters on this particular morning, not having been to bed at all on New Year's Eve. I wasn't feeling too well and I thought, perhaps, that a round of examining the animals might clear my head.

As I came to the cat barn I looked inside the cages in the semidark and I thought I noticed more than the usual occupant in one of them. I called the cage boy and as we turned on the light we saw that the female leopard had with her two leopard cubs hardly more than an hour old. She had already badly injured one. One school of thought insists that a leopard will kill her young in captivity. The other school has it that her intent is not to kill the young, but to drag them to a safe place away from prying eyes, and in this desperate attempt the babies become injured.

We ran the female into an adjoining cage and I went in and picked up the two cubs. To have left them there would have meant their certain death. I wrapped them carefully in blankets and went home with them. The injured cub died the following day. We determined that Sweetheart was going to live.

Sweetheart was as small as a kitten and her fur was very fuzzy and warm. Her face was screwed up like a baby's and she was the most appealing animal I ever saw. Our problem was feeding her. I haven't had to bottle-feed many babies in the circus, but I did frequently have to in private practice. So I looked through some of my notebooks and evolved what I considered an adequate formula for a leopard. Her first formula consisted of one ounce of water, one ounce of evaporated milk, a little powdered calcium, and a couple

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of drops of cod-liver oil. Martha used to feed Sweetheart every three hours right around the clock. A feeding used to take at least a full hour and during that time Sweetheart would consume all of one ounce.

I doubt that many babies have required the care and the constant attention of our leopard. We watched her carefully. We changed her formula whenever there was the slightest indication that it wasn't agreeing with her, and by the end of two months we had a very healthy, very lively kitten in the household.

We have always kept a house full of dogs; I am particularly partial to Dalmatians. Sweetheart and the dogs played together constantly. She would sleep in their bed with them at night and they would play outside and rough each other up during the day. We would walk her on a leash and by the end of two months she was completely housebroken.

One night we called the dogs in and Sweetheart wasn't with them. Martha acted as though she were about to lose her mind. I didn't but I felt that way. We called and called, but no Sweetheart. In desperation, I decided to beat the brush in the vicinity of our house. As I walked past the end of our lawn, I heard Sweetheart crying very lightly in the distance.

I worked my way through the waist-high grass in the field next to us and there was Sweetheart. She had been playing there with the dogs and had got all tangled up and bewildered in the high grass. When her playmates bounded into the house she was lost.

I wouldn't like to go on record as saying that leopards make wonderful pets. There may be leopards that you wouldn't



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want to have around the house. All I do know is that Sweetheart was an excellent one. She used to play more gently than a house cat. She never tore anything up and even when she became a big animal I never knew her to show her claws to me or anyone else while playing. Instinct, it seems to me, would demand that a leopard, like a house cat, extend her claws in a sudden defensive gesture or in an attempt to save herself if she thought she was going to fall. Sweetheart, apparently, had a very trusting nature because she never did so.

Sweetheart never liked my reading the newspaper at night, since she considered my homecoming a sign that playtime for her had started. If I sat down with the newspaper she would come bounding into my lap and hit the paper out of my hand. Then she would curl up very quietly and look up into my eyes, her chin on her paws, and wait for me to either stroke her or play with her.

When she was three months old we were ready to go on the road. By this time we were feeding her a little meat by pulverizing it and mixing it in her milk. By cutting the end of the nipple off her bottle, we found it comparatively easy to feed her the meat.

In New York, because we were there for about five weeks, we lived in a hotel near Madison Square Garden.

We wondered how the hotel would react to our bringing the leopard into the room. I had fashioned a cardboard carrying case for Sweetheart, which would allow her some ventilation, but would muffle her very uncanine noises. As we walked into the lobby of the hotel, I was holding the carrying case as though it were loaded with thousand-dollar bills.

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Martha said, "Don't be so nervous about it. They allow dogs here, don't they?"

"Yes," I said, "but I wonder what their reaction would be to a leopard."

"It would probably not be good," said Martha, with feminine logic, "so we won't ask them."

If I were a room clerk in a big hotel, it seemed to me, and a guest came up and asked if he might keep a leopard in his room, I knew what I would say. So we smuggled Sweetheart into our room and we kept her shut up in the bathroom when we were out of the apartment.

We made one mistake. We forgot to take the maid into our confidence. From what we could piece together from neighbors and innocent bystanders, the maid casually opened our door and walked into the apartment to clean. She had left the hall door wide open and had just finished making the bed and started for the bathroom. She turned the knob, opened the door, and was met head-on by what was rapidly becoming a very respectable-size leopard.

She let out a scream and went dashing down the hall. For some reason, Sweetheart stopped at the door and just sadly watched her go. All she had wanted was a playmate. She was lonesome and this human being didn't understand.

It reminds me of a story I've heard attributed to Dorothy Parker. A friend, it seems, gave Miss Parker a young alligator some three feet long. Not knowing what else to do with it, Miss Parker merely put it in her bathtub and went out shopping. When she returned she found a note from her maid who had come in during her absence:

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I have resigned. I refuse to work in a house where there is an alligator in the bathtub. I would have told you this before, but I did not think the matter would ever come up.

The only difference here was that when we explained matters to the maid, she developed an overwhelming fondness for playing with Sweetheart. People we had never seen before would stop us in the hall and tell us what tricks Sweetheart was doing now, so we gathered that the maid was bringing in audiences.

Unlike many wild animals who are attached only to the people who raise them, Sweetheart was very fond of strangers. No matter who came to call on us, whether in our house in Sarasota or in our stateroom on the road, Sweetheart would ignore us and play up to them. She never did or tried to do any harm. We did learn from experience, though, that lady visitors should remove their stockings.

At the end of our first year on the road, Sweetheart was a very good-sized leopard. She weighed about fifty pounds and she was active and healthy, but there were still no signs of wildness. However, we knew these were bound to come; there was the constant danger that some tiny sound or smell or action would arouse the wild instinct and Sweetheart would become dangerous. We watched her very carefully. There was never a sign that she was anything but a domesticated cat.

We never tried to teach her tricks, because that always involves a certain amount of discipline and we did not want to discipline Sweetheart beyond the bare necessities. We didn't want a performing animal. But she had her own tricks: she used to stand up to have her tummy rubbed; she used to

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take our hands and our arms in her mouth and gnaw on them gently. She used to stand up against us and take our faces between her paws while we would do the same with hers, and rub noses. She would roll over when we told her to. Beyond that, she was untrained.

Finally when she was a year old and weighed seventy pounds, we felt that it would be foolhardy to let her run loose any longer. So, with heavy hearts and more than a slight feeling of guilt, we put her in the menagerie and wondered whether being in a cage would sour her. We knew that being trained would, because of the soft treatment she had received as a bottle-fed animal.

Surprising as it may seem, her being caged hasn't changed her at all. Her eyes are still soft and gentle and she is still the same pet she was when we had her in the house.

Not long after being caged, while traveling, her tail stuck through the bars one day and a chimpanzee caught hold of it and bit it. I lifted the tail and it seemed to be badly broken. I set it the best way I could and put it in a cast, knowing that probably she would chew the cast off. This she did, although she did let it stay on for a couple of days. But even then fragments of the cast remained and the tail healed up nicely.

At the end of the 1949 season, I was in my hospital while the boys were unloading the animals which had just come off the road into winter quarters. One of them came over and called me and said, "Hey Doc, we are having trouble with Sweetheart." I never heard of Sweetheart giving anybody any trouble, so I ran over to the menagerie building.

Sweetheart was in her wagon, which had just been wheeled off the flatcar. The boys had pushed it close up against her

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cage, but she was refusing to budge. When I arrived they were poking her, and one of them had just hit her in an impatient effort to make her move. We have a strict order that the animals are never to be hit except in self-defense. Even when they are poked, they are just prodded gently to give them the idea of what we want them to do. Most animals will do what we want them to if we simply let them know.

I was infuriated because, to my knowledge, Sweetheart had never been hit before, and I didn't want anything to happen to her which would sour her. That can happen to a wild animal instantaneously. I drove all the boys away and stayed outside the cage talking to her for about half an hour. She seemed much calmer. Finally I put my hand through the bars. She licked my hand and let me pat her. Then she stood up against the bars and invited me to rub her stomach. When I thought the chances were in my favor, I opened the door and walked into her wagon. I stood at the far end and let her make the advances. Eventually she came over to me and rubbed against my leg just the way a pussycat would. I put my arms out and she came to me. I picked her up and carried her out of the wagon into her regular cage. It is the only time I have ever felt even a little worried at being in the cage with Sweetheart, and this was only because I knew the rough treatment she had received might have upset her.

To this day she resides in the menagerie, and she is still, to my mind, the most beautiful cat I have ever seen. At least once a day Martha or I will visit her to bring her a can of milk in which there is some pulverized meat, just for old times' sake. And in Sweetheart's favor, let it be said that though

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she is a wild animal and always must be, she has never forgotten either her old friends or her old tricks.

Her cubs are the most beautiful I have ever seen. They are larger than most; their spots are bigger, and instead of just black they are more of a chestnut color. The babies have the softest fur and the brightest eyes . . . I find that I have to guard against being tempted to talk like a typical grandfather.

## CHAPTER XVI Monkeys and Me

**T**HE MONKEY is the average spectator's favorite animal. People are impressed by its similarity to themselves. They refer to it as "cute." They enjoy watching monkeys as performers who are always doing something unexpected. They are impressed with a monkey's smartness — with the chimpanzee especially, because he is by far the brightest.

I am impressed, too, but not in quite the same way.

From the day I first joined the circus, I began realizing that the chimps were going to be a very special problem. It wasn't that they were so hard to handle; they weren't. It was simply that you could never devise a method of handling them that would stick. You could devise methods of treating every other animal and, once devised, that method could be relied on. But not with the chimps. They were simply too smart. The better the method, the less likely it was that they would ever permit it to be used again. They could see through it.

Nellie, a chimpanzee, came down with a bad cough late one night. The keeper called me up at home and I drove out to look at her. He said she had been coughing for about two hours. Her chest sounded normal and clear so I gave her some cough syrup and told the keeper to keep feeding it to her every couple of hours.

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But by the time I got back to quarters in the morning, she had a well-developed case of pneumonia. I decided that the only thing that would save her was an injection of penicillin or streptomycin. Injecting a chimp is a special problem because they have four hands and a very sharp strong set of teeth. They will fight you with all five weapons. I didn't want to struggle with Nellie or have several men hold her down because the strength she would use in fighting would weaken her even further.

I had two of the keepers take her out of the cage and each one held a hand while they took her for a walk down the path. Then each boy stretched her arms up so that she could not bite them. Another man held her feet and I gave her an injection in the hind quarters. Nellie let out a squeal, but it was all over in a couple of seconds. Within a couple of days, she was all right. Her recovery was complete. But ever since that time, Nellie has refused to give up both her hands at the same time. If two men want to take her for a walk, she will give one a hand and tuck the other one under her armpit, only releasing it when the other hand has been shaken free and tucked under its armpit.

Thus such a patient taxes a doctor's ingenuity because you need as many different methods of treating as there are times when treatment is necessary.

Besides, chimps cause more trouble than most other monkeys because chimps are basically meaner. If a bad-natured chimp can possibly grab you with his hands — and his arms are extremely strong — the chances are he won't let you free until he has pulled you up to him and bitten you. His bite is sharp and hard. Of course, it is possible to



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get friendly with even the mean ones. If you have enough patience and you spend enough time talking to them and playing with them, they will become friendly. My disadvantage is that I don't have that time. Furthermore, whenever they see me they get hurt, and they've learned that very quickly.

The result is that I can't, even now, pass any of the chimps without being bombarded with tin plates, orange peels, bananas, or anything else they happen to have in their cages. I am their sworn enemy; nothing will convince them otherwise.

Monkeys are frail anywhere in our climate. They develop coughs and colds at the slightest provocation, and these develop into pneumonia or TB almost while you watch. Before the days of penicillin and the drugs of that family, a monkey with TB or pneumonia was as good as dead. But now I have very good luck treating them and we lose very few.

Contrary to popular belief, it is not the cold that bothers them but damp weather and drafts. For that reason, we ship all our monkeys in glass cages. When the weather is warm and no wind is blowing, we can throw up the glass in the front and let the fresh air in. If there is any chance at all that the weather isn't good for them, we drop the glass and let just a small amount of air in for ventilation.

The nicest thing about monkeys is that they can take care of themselves pretty well. When the weather is cold we not only keep the cages filled with straw, but we throw in blankets and sacks. The monkeys do the rest. They wrap them-

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selves up in several sacks and roll up in the blankets.

I have never had any tooth trouble in any of the monkeys. I don't know why this is so; I suppose their teeth and their bones generally are extremely hard. Their diet may have something to do with it; they eat fruit and vegetables, cod-liver oil and vitamins. The only dietary trouble occurs when a monkey eats too many oranges. They can, like babies, develop an allergy to oranges.

It surprised me to learn that monkeys are fine swimmers and divers. We have a big monkey island in winter quarters around which is the hippopotamus pool. The monkeys climb up into the high trees and go diving off into the water. They dive beautifully. They swim well, too. The only trouble we ever had with swimming monkeys was one day when we let the Diana monkeys out for the first time. They had never seen water before and had never been in swimming. Like children, they stayed in the water so long they both developed serious chills and bad coughs.

I went into the cage with them and, taking them one at a time, wrapped them in blankets and rubbed and massaged them, not only to get them dry but to get them warm. They tried their best to bite and I had more trouble keeping from getting bitten than I did keeping them warm.

These same two Dianas caused us considerable trouble because the female was very weak and timid and the male was extremely rough. This male amused himself chiefly in two ways. One of his exercises was harmless. He would race from one side of the cage to the other, taking a flying leap, hitting the side of the cage feet first and then doing a backward somersault landing back on the floor on all four feet. His

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other exercise was a little less innocent. He would go racing around the cage at a gallop while the female sat huddled by the bars at the front. Every time he passed her he would either hit her on the head or grab her tail and pull her after him for a few feet.

Somehow or other he once got hold of a broom handle and one day he varied this game by hitting her with the stick. By the time we discovered this game, she was having trouble walking. When I examined her I realized she had a spinal injury. It wasn't serious, but it impaired her activity. At this point we separated them.

This is characteristic of monkeys. If one monkey in a pair or group is timid or weak, that one will be unmercifully set upon by the others.

One year we ordered a shipment of ten rhesus monkeys from a dealer in New York. The monkeys were all healthy and in good shape when they were shipped, but when they arrived we found nine healthy live monkeys and one dead one. This is not uncommon in monkey shipments. For if one becomes sick or turns out to be a little timid, the group will bite it and beat it to death. In a pair, a strong monkey may eat all the food and the timid monkey will make no attempt at all to eat while it starves to death.

Our chimpanzees are much more subject to ailments than are the orangutans. This is probably because the chimps represent a higher order. Certainly they are more intelligent than the others — but I like the oranges.

I had a little orang who was quartered in a cage next to a chimpanzee. She tried to get friendly with him, but he would have none of her. One day, she put her arms through the

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bars of the cage and made an attempt to touch him. He grabbed her hand and bit the end of her finger off, including nearly all of the nail, and broke what was left of the finger.

The keeper called me immediately and I treated the wound and put the finger in a cast, hoping that the bone would heal. She was a little annoyed by the cast and bit most of it off. However, she left enough so that the bone stayed in place and eventually healed. It was a little pathetic to watch her after that, because as long as the splint stayed on her finger, whenever anyone would come near her, she would push her arm through the cage and hold the hand up, her eyes wide and her eyebrows arched: "Look. I have a sore finger." This was some years ago and even now, whenever I come near her, she will hold that hand up to me and at the same time cover her eyes with the other hand and turn her head away, for all the world as if she were saying, "O.K., Doc, I know it's going to hurt, but I know it's for my own good."

Our monkeys are never a real problem because we have so few of them. We probably have no more trouble with ours, despite our traveling from one climate to another, than does the average zoo in our so-called temperate climate.

But the gorillas *are* a problem, and their story is another one.

## CHAPTER XVII Gargantua Was So Lost

I MET GARGANTUA the day I joined the circus. He had already decided that he didn't like anybody in this world, and he didn't expect anybody to like him. He had adjusted himself to his environment as he saw it.

Gargantua was not always so unattractive. Built like a large barrel, he was strong and vicious, but the so-called sneer on his face — his well-publicized perpetual snarl — was actually caused by a scar. It was the result of his having had acid thrown in his face when he was a young boy. Those who had been close to him for many years claimed, and with good reason, that his disposition, too, stemmed largely from this incident. We have seen it happen in children. It can happen in gorillas, too.

Dick Kroener, Gargantua's first trainer, told me the story. Gargantua was being brought over to America when he was a baby. A sailor on the boat, having been reprimanded by the skipper for something and apparently not being an animal lover at heart, had a drink or two too many and threw a glass of acid in Gargantua's face. This evened him up with the skipper. It isn't known what effect this had on the latter's personality; but many of us at first hand have seen what effect it had on an otherwise beautiful gorilla.

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Gargantua was one of the biggest and oldest gorillas in America. He weighed well over 550 pounds, a handsome specimen. His strength was incalculable, and he was the only patient I have ever had whom I found it almost impossible to treat. During the years I knew him he had a few sicknesses and, to a slight degree, I could take care of him. But when his final illness came in the spring of 1949, I was helpless.

In 1942, Gargantua became sick for the first time in my experience with him. Dick Kroener had been with him a long time and had accompanied him to the circus. Gargantua probably liked Kroener as well as he liked any human being, but even then "liking" is perhaps too strong a word: even Kroener couldn't go near him. We diagnosed the illness as pneumonia. This is very serious in any monkey, but particularly in gorillas, because medically speaking they are the frailest of all monkeys in our climate. Penicillin was not yet available for general use; even if it had been, I don't know that I could have given penicillin to Gargantua even back then.

I did manage to hide enough sulfa in his milk to do the work and, at the same time, we had his cage piped for oxygen. We always kept Gargantua in an air-conditioned, glass-enclosed cage. Its temperature was always an even seventy-eight degrees and the amount of fresh air was always carefully regulated. In this instance, the oxygen people built an intake into the air-conditioning system and very carefully regulated the flow of pure oxygen.

Kroener died in that year and the following year José Tomas, who had brought M'Toto, later Mrs. Gargantua, to

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the show, took over the care of Gargantua as well. Tomas was one of the very few highly experienced gorilla men in this country.

In 1943 Gargantua became extremely sluggish and logy. He scarcely moved. His eyes were heavy and he was losing his appetite. It was Tomas's observation which gave us the clue to his ailment — acute constipation. It was impossible, or at least suicidal, for anyone to go near Gargantua. He nearly killed Kroener once when he walked too close to the cage. The glass door was open at the time, and Gargantua had grabbed Kroener by both shoulders and dragged him to the bars. He certainly would have crushed him had not another keeper rushed up with a stick and begun hitting Gargantua on the nose. Infuriated, the gorilla loosened his grip to turn on the other keeper, and in that instant Kroener, barely conscious, managed to get loose.

Another time Gargantua grabbed John Ringling North by both sleeves of a leather jacket. If North hadn't been strong enough to tear himself out of that jacket and leave the sleeves dangling in Gargantua's hands, there would probably be another director of the Ringling Circus today.

Since I couldn't get anywhere near Gargantua to treat him, I couldn't take his temperature and I couldn't listen to his heart or lungs. However, during this attack of constipation, I worked out a trick. I withheld all food from him, even his fruit, which was the only thing he would eat. After twenty-four hours, Tomas and I "snaked" him into the small compartment in the far end of his cage. (Gorillas — even Gargantua — are terrified of snakes. We kept a stuffed one handy and whenever we dropped it into his cage, Gargantua would

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bound into the small compartment at the end of his cage and slam the door shut.)

Then I went into the big compartment with one of Gargantua's favorite foods, a bottle of Coca-Cola. There were heavy bars separating the compartments and I held the Coke bottle up with its neck sticking through the bars. Just as he was about to take a sip, I grabbed it away. I repeated this three or four times. When Gargantua was thoroughly infuriated, I switched bottles and gave him a bottle containing half coke and half castor oil. He gulped it down greedily and then realized that he had been tricked. I have never in my life seen any animal quite so angry. He jumped up and down screaming. He picked up the automobile tire which was his favorite toy and threw it violently against the bars of the cage. He grabbed the bars in both hands and both Tomas and I were convinced he was going to tear his cage apart.

Tomas had a little more confidence in the cage than I did. He stayed to watch. I found some urgent work to do at the other end of the grounds.

There was a time when Gargantua had eye trouble. I didn't know precisely what was wrong because I could never get near enough to him to do an accurate diagnosis. However, his eyes were red and infected and I suggested to Tomas that if boric acid could be put in them it might do some good. Tomas agreed to try. I mixed up a boric acid solution and he would stand by the hour, teasing Gargantua into a position inside his small compartment. He would play with him and whenever Gargantua would come near the bars,



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Tomas would squirt at his eyes. Since it didn't sting and didn't hurt, this became a sort of game to the gorilla and he appeared to enjoy it to the very slight extent he allowed himself to enjoy anything. In the course of a two- to three-hour session every day for a week, Tomas managed to get some of the boric acid into his eyes and the condition soon cleared up.

But in June of 1949, we knew that Gargantua was a very sick ape. He was extremely restless; he was showing less and less interest in his food; he wasn't acting quite so mean. His gums looked inflamed. And Tomas and I would stand at his cage by the hour, trying to decide what to do for him and feeling absolutely helpless and impotent. There was nothing we could do. We couldn't take his temperature. We couldn't listen to him with a stethoscope. We couldn't feel his pulse. We couldn't even get close enough to take a really good look at his teeth, his gums, or his eyes in order to help a diagnosis. We could just stand several feet away from his cage and watch him gradually sinking.

Even some of his habits changed. For instance, before going to sleep at night, he was always given a thick, fuzzy cotton blanket. He used to spread this out on the floor of his cage and spend as much as an hour getting it absolutely flat without a wrinkle. He would then lie down in it, roll up completely, and go to sleep. In the morning, he would wake up and, very carefully and methodically, rip the blanket to shreds. We used to buy them by the gross and a gross lasted exactly one hundred and forty-four days. Now he was becoming careless about smoothing the blanket before rolling up in

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it, although he still carefully tore it to shreds on awakening in the morning.

About two weeks before he died, we were playing in Virginia and Dr. William Mann, head of the Washington zoo, came down to see the show. I took him over to look at Gargantua and he and I did exactly what Tomas and I had been doing for months. We stood and looked, helplessly; shook our heads and said, "What a shame that such a beautiful animal should make it impossible for us to help him."

We could guess then that Gargantua had stomatitis because of the red, inflamed gums. He must have had very bad teeth, although we couldn't see them, because he was neglecting some of his favorite foods such as bananas. He would sit in the corner of his cage and lick a banana avidly, but never bite it. He still drank his orange juice and his cocoa, but he wouldn't take anything that had to be chewed. We managed to get a little nicotinic acid into him in his cocoa and in his orange juice. We also succeeded in getting penicillin and aureomycin into his stomach; but we were groping, and this wasn't enough.

Some of the symptoms were similar to a deficiency disease in dogs called sore mouth, but I knew that couldn't be the trouble with Gargantua because we had always fed him a very carefully balanced diet. His normal diet consisted of chocolate, milk, water, every conceivable kind of fruit juice, all fruits, all vegetables, a little cooked liver, cod-liver oil, and liver extract. With that kind of diet, you simply don't get sore mouth. On that diet, Gargantua had always been fat, vigorous, and active. And even at times when he was a little under the weather, Tomas could always coax him to eat. I

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don't know what his particular magic was, but he somehow managed to make Gargantua eat even when he had no appetite.

I have often been asked why it wasn't possible to anesthetize him and then examine and treat him while he was asleep. There are only two ways to anesthetize a large animal. You can give him something like Nembutal in a vein, or you have to give him ether. It was impossible to get close enough to give him an injection of any kind. We couldn't put him in the squeeze cage because no squeeze cage is strong enough and he was too active. In order to feed him Nembutal by mouth or to pump an anesthetic through the air-conditioning system, it would have been necessary to know more accurately his tolerance. Tolerance in an animal depends on two things: his weight and also the amount of fat. We usually subtract most of the weight of the fat from the overall weight in order to gauge the amount of the anesthesia. With Gargantua, it was impossible to feel him or to estimate how much of him might be fat. Therefore, giving him an anesthetic through the air-conditioning system or by mouth was too dangerous to try. There was always the chance that by some miracle he would recover; we couldn't take the chance of killing him. By the time we knew he was dying, it was too late for this treatment.

Finally one morning in Miami, our final date in the 1949 tour, Tomas called me over and we stood looking at the most vicious animal in captivity. He was huddled in a corner in the far end of his cage. His chin rested on his chest. His legs stuck straight out in front of him and his arms flopped on the floor. His vicious expression looked as though it had been

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painted on his massive face. Tomas and I spent most of that day with him looking for some sign that would help us to treat him. He hardly touched his liquids. He didn't eat. He just lay there looking very mean and very unhappy.

Late that night, Tomas and I attempted to feed him. We opened part of the cage and, with sticks, moved the food around trying to arouse his curiosity. We thought perhaps, if we could get him up and make him move around, that might arouse some appetite. But even the toy snake didn't arouse him. We knew then that this was the end. We would have stayed with him all night; we would have stayed with him for months if there was anything we could do. There was absolutely nothing.

During the night death, as it must to all animals, came to Gargantua the Great. He was twenty-two years old, which is old for a gorilla in captivity, and he was his own worst enemy.

The next morning, the enormous monster was stretched out on the floor of his cage. Lifeless, he was I think one of the saddest sights I have ever seen. What made me doubly sad was that there was much that might have been done. He had died of bilateral lobar pneumonia, complicated by a kidney disorder and four completely rotted wisdom teeth.

I have had a theory about people for a long time. I think the way they die is the result of what they are. Procrastinating people eventually die because they put off going to the doctor for something they know should be treated. Foolhardy people die usually because they have taken one chance too many. Gargantua died because of his distrust and vicious-

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ness. His outstanding characteristic prevented his friends from helping him, and eventually killed him.

But life must go on, in the circus as well as out, and a few weeks after we came into winter quarters two baby gorillas arrived. They created more excitement than I have ever seen in winter quarters. The two were brought down by car from Tampa where they had been flown from New York. One was a female about eight months old and about twenty inches high. She was immediately named Mademoiselle Toto. The other was the male, twelve months old and perhaps a little over two feet tall; he, of course, was named Gargantua II.

Both of them looked exactly like full-grown gorillas, except that they were miniatures. They were cuddly and friendly but both of them would bite you in a minute if you tried to make them do something they didn't want to do.

We immediately partitioned off a section of the monkey house, and within the partitioned area we air-conditioned two cages, one for each baby. A larger room was furnished for Martha Hunter, the young lady who was to be their keeper. Miss Hunter was a graduate anthropologist and a trained dietitian. Raising gorillas is the only thing in the world harder than raising children; it requires an expert.

The temperature was very carefully controlled and the equipment in their cages was carefully picked to give them the proper exercise without putting them into any danger. The ropes on which they swung had to be of sufficient thickness so that if they got tangled up in them they couldn't strangle. Their food was very carefully heated to just the right

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temperature and they were on a diet, as are all babies, of canned baby foods, fruit juices, and milk. In time, Gargantua II and Mademoiselle Toto would be the largest gorillas in captivity.

We still had M'Toto also, who had come to us in 1940 as a mate for Gargantua. Tomas had raised her from a baby, bringing her through several serious childhood illnesses. Gargantua would never have anything to do with her and, since he showed no interest, we had been afraid to keep them in the same cage for fear he would kill her.

M'Toto was eighteen years old and entirely the opposite of Gargantua. Although she is big and strong, and therefore dangerous, she is not at all a vicious animal. Tomas, even recently, has gone into her cage to play with her, although knowing it to be risky.

A year or so before Gargantua died, Tomas was in M'Toto's cage when she hit him across the face with the back of her hand — a very casual pat, not meant in anger. But Tomas went sailing through the air like a rubber ball, hit the edge of the cage, and fell in a heap on the floor. M'Toto went over to him, cradled him in her arms, and wouldn't release him until he regained consciousness. She fondled and kissed him as though he were a baby.

There is nothing destructive about M'Toto's nature, and Tomas has even managed to train her to a limited extent. He will talk to her in Spanish saying things like: eyes, nose, mouth. M'Toto will point to those features on her own face. She can also count on her fingers as Tomas has instructed her.

Luckily, since being in our circus, M'Toto has not ever

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seemed sick. I don't know, frankly, what I would be able to do for her if she were. I know she wouldn't permit me in her cage, but maybe Tomas could give her something. There is always the chance that we could try doping her food, but with an animal as sensitive and as intelligent as a gorilla this might put her off all food for a dangerously long period.

Within six months of the time that the babies arrived, it took three of us to treat one of them — two to hold him down and one to medicate. They were already growing up. The real tragedy of a gorilla is that his diseases may be curable but the patient himself untreatable.

## CHAPTER XVIII Sawdust in My Stethoscope

VISITORS to the circus frequently ask what kind of work I have to do most. Whenever I think about this, it always amuses me, because I can't imagine work with a greater variety of activity even within one specialty than this job of mine. That is one reason I like it and I stay with it despite the many obvious disadvantages.

So far, you have been reading about the events that I normally meet during the course of twenty-four hours. There are other things that happen.

One day, while we were in winter quarters, the owner of the Jungle Gardens in Sarasota called me on the telephone.

"I have a big black swan with a broken leg," he said. "Can you do anything for her?"

"I don't know," I said. I felt very much like the man who was asked whether he could play the violin. He answered that he didn't know because he had never tried. I had never worked on a swan, but I knew a little bit about chickens. I told him to bring her over and about a half-hour later he drove up to the little white hospital building, his arms full of black swan.

He had been clipping her wings and in a sudden, wrench-



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ing effort to get free of him, she had twisted and broken her leg. I put a splint on the leg and bound it firmly to get good traction. Her owner then put her in the car and carried her back to the Jungle Gardens. In a little while he was back again.

As he had opened the car door, she had jumped out and attempted to run around with the splint; and now the leg was broken for good. It was broken in several pieces and the fractures were all compounded, that is, piercing the skin.

"I think you had better put her away, Doc," he said, "she's never going to be any good and I don't want her to suffer."

"Well, I'll tell you what I'll do," I said. "You leave her here with me and let me try to fix her up. I just want to experiment. If I can't do anything about it, I'll destroy her."

I studied the leg very carefully and found that in a swan the drumstick is set very low down on the body rather than high up on the hip. So I used a local anesthetic and amputated the entire leg. I removed the drumstick as one would with a chicken at dinner. I kept her in a padded box for several days until she got her strength back. I didn't think this was going to be successful, because there was the problem of walking and a swan is a very big bird to try walking on one leg. There was also the problem of swimming; it seemed to me that using only one leg she would swim in circles constantly and would wind up either starved to death, frustrated, or dizzy.

The day I lifted her out of her box and set her on the floor she amazed me; although she first fell seven or eight times within fifteen minutes, she was soon hopping along in a

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perfectly straight line. I took her out to the watering trough in the horse corral and put her in. I have never seen a bird so obviously enjoying herself. She splashed and cavorted and kicked, having a wonderful time. She practically whooped. When she finally realized that the water was deep enough for swimming, she sailed straight down the center of that watering trough as though she were being steered by an Annapolis skipper. Watching her carefully, I realized a fact that is still hard for me to believe. She was varying the pitch of that one good leg in order to steer, very much the way an expert paddles a canoe without switching the paddle from one side to another.

After watching her for a week to be sure she could live normally, I brought her back to her owner, who had by now taken for granted that she had been put away. At this writing, some four years later, she is still living in the Jungle Gardens at Sarasota where any skeptic can call on her any time he is in the neighborhood.

One morning started normally enough: I got to the grounds of winter quarters early and found Andy, an Alaskan brown bear, in agony with a toothache; I pulled his tooth, visited the horse corral on the way back and treated a horse for colic, then stopped to look at several pregnant mares in the lower corral. I examined the paw of a cheetah in the cat barn. And just about noontime, I arrived back at the hospital building to find a message that the owner of the reptile farm in Sarasota wanted me to call him.

Instead of phoning, I decided to call there on my way into town for lunch.

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"Doc," he said, "what do you know about alligators?"  
I laughed.

"I know enough to watch out for those jaws," I said.

"Have you ever operated on one?"

"No, and I never want to."

"Look, Doc, I'm in trouble. Two of our alligators had a fight and one had his leg bitten off. Will you take a look at it and do what you can?"

I asked him where the alligator was and he led me to a pen where dozed not one, not two, but twenty huge reptiles.

"You mean I get in there with them?" I asked.

"Yes," he said, "they don't hurt the boys." And indeed, they weren't hurting the boys: his various helpers were running around the pen, not only near but on the alligators, walking on them, sitting on them, jumping up and down on them. Yet each of them seemed to be in full possession of two arms and two legs.

I got my emergency kit out of the car and put one boy in front of the patient to hold the beast's jaws closed. This is a lot easier than it sounds. Because of the muscular formation of an alligator's jaws, he has a very hard time opening his mouth, and a slight amount of pressure against those jaws can keep his mouth shut. On the other hand there is practically no force on earth that can hold his jaws open, and the force of his closing jaws has been known to do a good deal of damage to anything getting between them. So with the boy holding his mouth closed and two more in back of him to try to restrain his tail from thrashing, I took a look at the injured leg.

There was very little amputating left to be done. His

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adversary had bitten off all but three or four inches. I cut the rest of the leg off up to the joint and sutured it as best I could. Veterinarians' needles are usually three-edged affairs, the three knifelike edges coming to a point; they can get through nearly anything. But the alligator's skin nearly wrecked them. Still I did get the animal sutured, and hoped that he would be all right. But just as I suspected, he immediately dived down into the mud and rubbed his sutures off on the bottom of the pool. Strangely enough, he didn't get it infected. I looked at the leg a few weeks later and it was completely healed. He is another of my patients who to this day are living proof that some initial experiments can be successful.

We have a cassowary in the menagerie, a bird that looks very much like a turkey, but is almost the size of an ostrich. Although most birds take care of themselves pretty well and don't get sick, this character is one of my steady patients. Every once in a while, the menagerie superintendent will ask me to come and look at her. I find her breathing very hard, almost gasping for breath, and with a complete loss of appetite. I don't know what causes it, but I suspect that the cassowary as a species is subject to asthma.

She is hard to help, as you can't restrain a bird the way you can an animal. They have too many delicate parts — wings and legs and neck — and a little struggling on their part is likely to cause a fatal break. We have to hold them loosely and hope that they will stay still. This particular bird has a very vicious kick, very like that of an ostrich — an ostrich, you

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know, can break your leg with a well-placed kick. She also has little darts on the ends of her wings which may make you very sorry you got too close to her.

The first time I examined her, she got very upset and it looked for a moment as though one of us were going to get hurt. I finally decided that this would do neither of us any good and if I could treat her from a distance, it would be much better all around. I loaded her food with sulfa and I hoped she would eat enough to get rid of what was obviously a lung infection. The menagerie superintendent kept her away from food for about twenty-four hours but fed her lots of water and then he put the food with the sulfa in it in the cage. She gobbled it down hungrily and began improving from that point on.

Whenever I have to treat this bird now I follow the same procedure, and, with the psychological approach of the menagerie superintendent, we always bring her around.

Sinus trouble is not the only human ailment that circus animals are susceptible to. We have had a number of cases of stomach ulcers among the horses and the chimps. When the chimps have them, we usually try to regulate their lives so that they are as calm as possible with nothing happening to upset them. The horses can usually be treated with raw linseed oil and soft feed. This as far as I know doesn't cure the ulcer, but it does relieve the discomfort.

I have never known a case of appendicitis, but on many animals I have found a vermiform appendix when performing a post-mortem. Why the human appendix becomes inflamed and the animal's appendix doesn't, I don't know. It

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would certainly seem that animals should be as subject to appendicitis as we are. Perhaps it is a question of diet.

Toward the close of the 1949 season, as we were pulling out of Georgia, a short section of train had to stop suddenly at a crossing and, as it did, five large Percheron horses, weighing about a ton each, and tied to the door, fell over. The last one fell against the edge of the feed trough and cut a gash in his hind quarters eighteen inches long and four inches deep. It was the worst gash I have ever seen on a horse and although there was no doubt about saving him, it was obvious that he was going to be lame for the rest of his life.

I got him out of the car immediately and went to work. Instead of sewing him up externally, I first went deep inside the cut and sewed up the muscles with gut. This gut would dissolve within a few weeks, but meanwhile it would give support to the muscles inside. Then I pulled the outer skin tight over the wound, and sewed it up tightly.

Within two months this horse not only was working but had only the faintest trace of scar and no limp at all. This is a purely technical achievement and nothing that arouses *ah's* and *oh's*, but I show this horse to any horseman that comes through the grounds because it is one of the operations of which I am most proud.

On our last 1949 date in Miami, one of the menagerie men called me very early in the morning.

"Doc," he said, "we have another dead polar bear."

We had just lost one a few days before from a mysteriously induced internal hemorrhage and I didn't relish the idea of

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losing another. I took a long look; the bear was not quite dead, but the thread holding him to life was very thin. It was one that I had treated for worms that morning. I had administered the worming medicine and given the cage boy orders to follow it up with a laxative.

I asked the boy if he had given the laxative; he insisted he had. This may have been one of those rare cases where just a normal dose of worming medicine can't be tolerated by an animal. Or perhaps the laxative hadn't been given properly. I don't know, because there is no proof; but I did know that something drastic had to be done to this animal.

I determined that I would first give him a stimulant to keep him alive and then get into the cage with him as fast as I could and give him an enema, to be sure that the worming medicine was flushed out of his system. I rushed back for my equipment, went into the cage, stuck the needle in his hip and injected the stimulant. I then took my rubber tube and had gotten halfway to the point of being able to administer the enema when I was made to realize what a wonderful stimulant I had given. Like a shot he was on his feet growling at me, his shoulders hunched, his rear pressed against the bars of the cage. The rubber tube was dangling like a second tail. I was at the opposite end of the cage from him and not nearer than ten feet from the door.

Now even a healthy, happy polar bear can be as ugly as any other wild animal. This bear, since he wasn't feeling well, was uglier. With a bound he came after me and as he landed where I was, I jumped sideways. He was still a little sluggish from the medicine, so now he staggered slightly; as he did so I turned, dashed through the door and slammed it in his face.

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I stood outside the cage, breathless, for a few minutes, thankful that both this bear's life and mine had been saved. Then, using my old trick, I filled a capsule with the laxative, hid it in a small piece of meat and teased the bear into swallowing it.

There are always a lot of flies in Chicago and it is the only place in the country where we really have to take precautions to shield the animals, especially our Pinzgauer — a very small horse similar to a donkey. One year I told the boys that he was particularly unhappy at being fly-bitten and suggested that they do something to keep the flies off him. What they did was to spray a very strong solution over the animal from head to foot. The result was that within fifteen minutes they were calling for me because the animal seemed to be dying.

When I found out what they had done, I realized that the poison was being absorbed by the system and the little animal was nearly gone. I gave him a shot of stimulant and some calcium gluconate intravenously. I set the boys to work with scrubbing brushes and rubbing alcohol, scrubbing every bit of fly spray off his body so that no new poison could be absorbed from the outside while the stimulant was counteracting it internally. Within an hour we had him on his feet, but this is the kind of unnecessary accident that sends my blood pressure sky-high.

On one of my quick trips to Sarasota during the season to check on some animals that were left there, I discovered that my mare, Benny V, who had aborted not so long before, had developed a case of founder. She was so lame in her



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forefeet that she walked with the greatest difficulty. Now it seemed not only impossible that she could ever be bred, but also very likely that I would have to put her to sleep.

I medicated her as best I could, hoping to ease her pain until we came in off the road some weeks hence. By then she was in an almost hopeless condition. After trying everything else in vain, I gave her a large amount of normal saline solution in the vein every day for a week. A few days later, when I was sure she would have to be put away, she started to pick up miraculously. Her limp began to disappear. The under part of her foot became less sensitive.

Within two months she was her old self. I bred her to one of our best Arabians. Now the family is complete. Not only is Benny V in healthy shape herself, but her colt is carrying on the line that has followed our family fortunes since my father's wedding day.

One day in Tacoma, Damoo called me. "Please look at Poupette," he said.

"It's 12:45," I told him. "You are the first act. The doors open in fifteen minutes!"

"Then work in the ring," he pleaded; "she can't wait."

We ran into the big top and Damoo ran Poupette, one of his star leopards, into the ring. I knew at a glance that she had pneumonia. We walked into the cage together and, while I waited near the door, Damoo ordered her to sit on her pedestal. He crouched in front of her and patted her, while I slowly made my way around in back of her and got my needle ready. After a few minutes, when Damoo was sure she was calm, he nodded to me, and I gave her a shot of

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penicillin in the thigh muscle. She never stirred. I quietly made my way out of the cage.

Damoo kept her in the ring, but didn't perform her that day. After a few days and several shots, given more conventionally in the squeeze cage, she was fully recovered.

And then there was the day a tiger got sick. A swelling on his hip looked like a tumor. He was so knocked out that I was able to reach in through the side of his traveling cage and give him a shot of streptomycin while the cage boy stood in front of the cage talking to him. His only reply to me was the remnant of a once-proud growl. Streptomycin kept this animal alive for a long time. This and penicillin were performing true miracles; their use surpassed my fondest hopes.

Yes, anything can happen when you have seven hundred wild animals in your care.

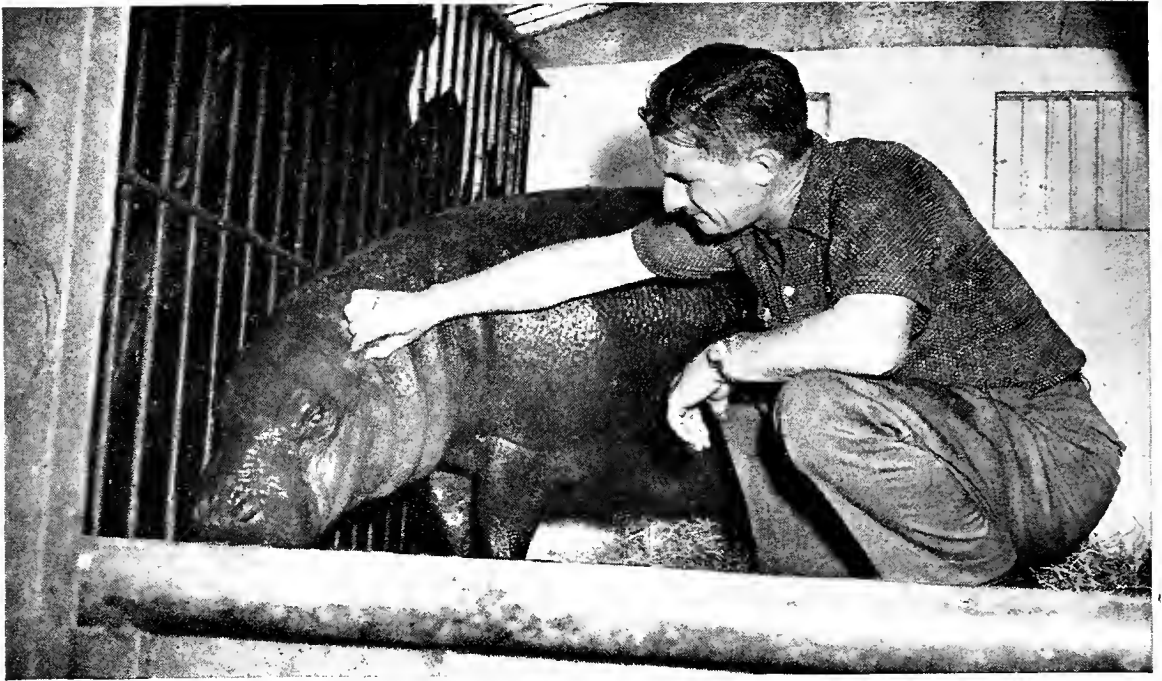
It usually does.



*Photo by Dick Miller*

### *Pony Boy*

He will soon be ready to entertain the children



*Photo by Dick Miller*

### *Betty Lou*

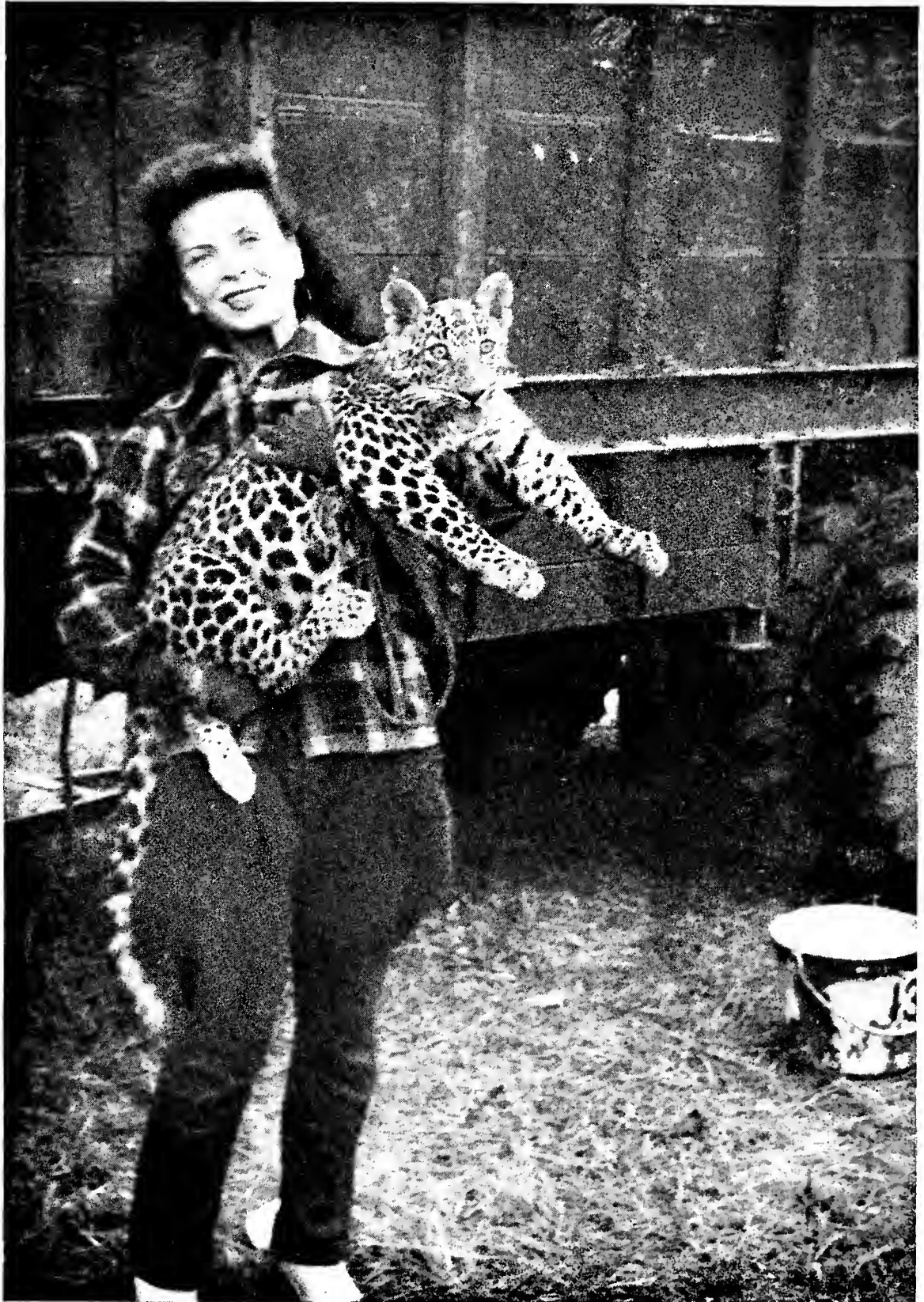
Her skin is surprisingly sensitive. Careful examination for dryness and bruises is one of her doctor's frequent duties



*Photo by Dick Miller*

### *Sweetheart*

Daily personal attention keeps her mild and friendly and wins the confidence of her cubs



*Courtesy Joseph F. Markham, Troy, N.Y.*

### *A Perfect Pet*

Sweetheart loves Martha's attention

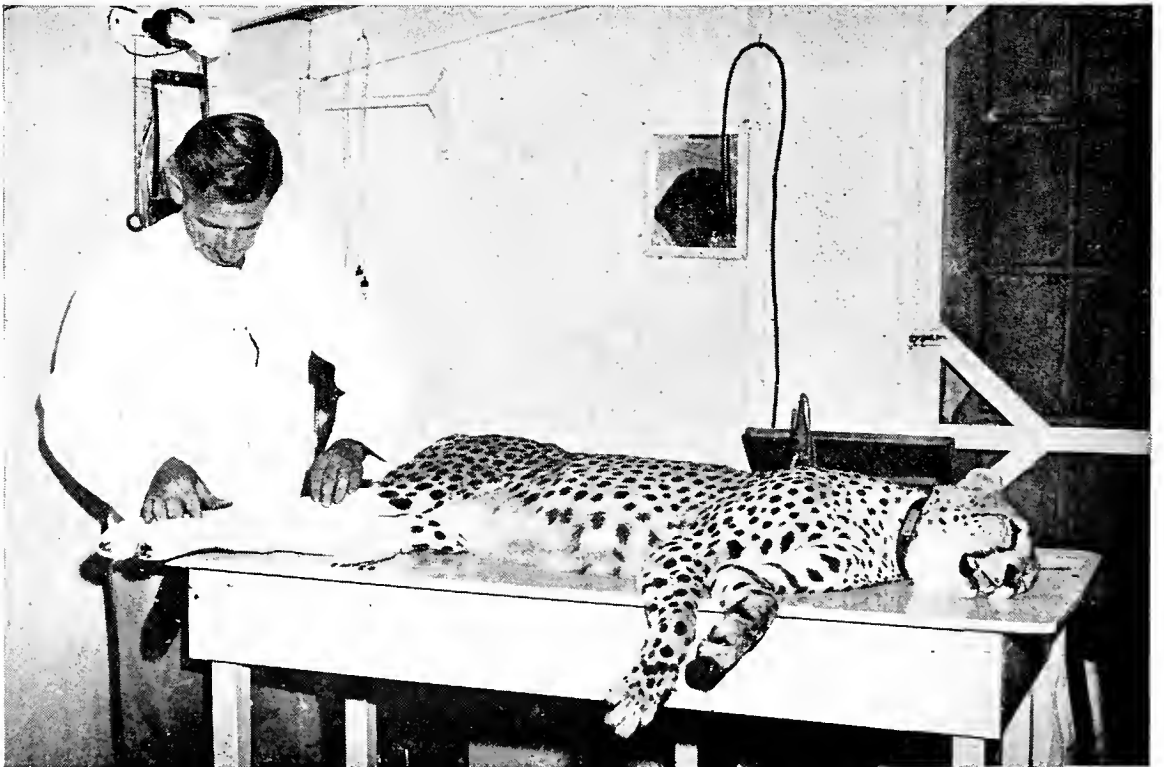




*Photo by Dick Miller*

### *A Camel Has a Rare Mild Moment*

Ali allows inspection of an old bump



*Photo by Dick Miller*

### *Finishing Cuba's Operation*

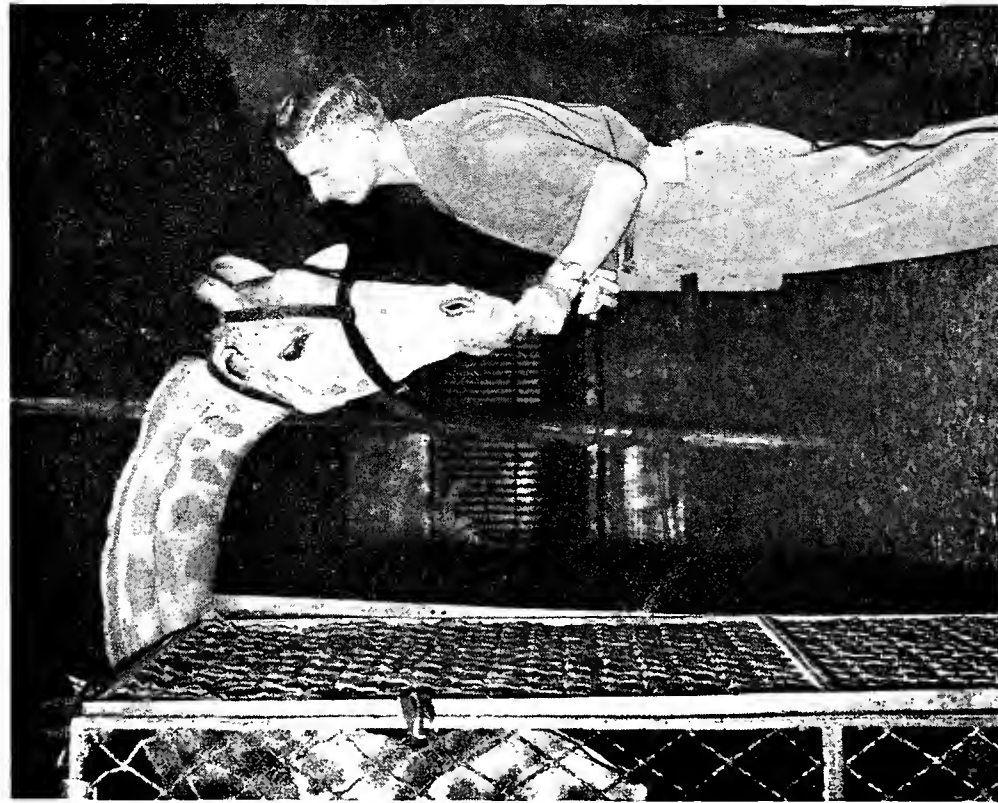
She had compound fractures of both hind legs



*Photo by Dick Miller*

### *Say "Ah"*

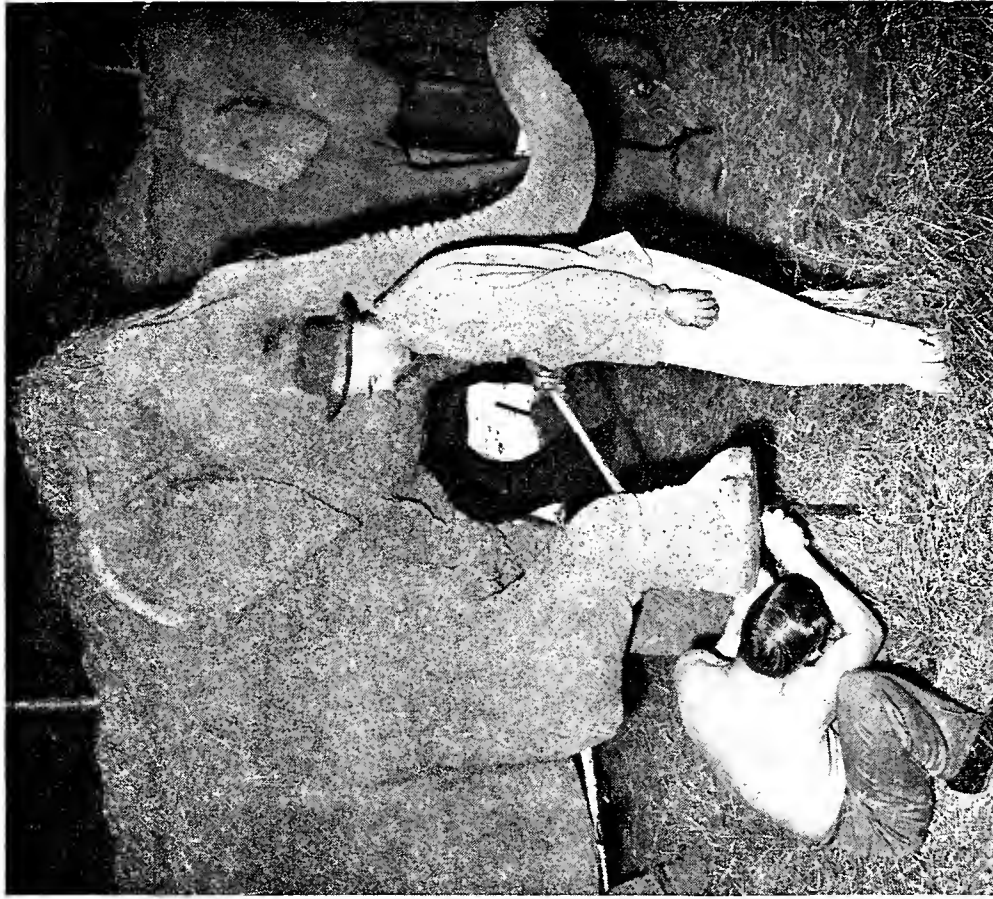
The area alone of a hippo's mouth takes a lot of time



*Photo by Dick Miller*

### *Feeding Edie*

A tidbit coaxes her head down so a wound can be examined



*Photo by Dick Miller*

### *Ruth Suffers from Cuticle Trouble*

As with all elephants, constant examination prevents serious infection

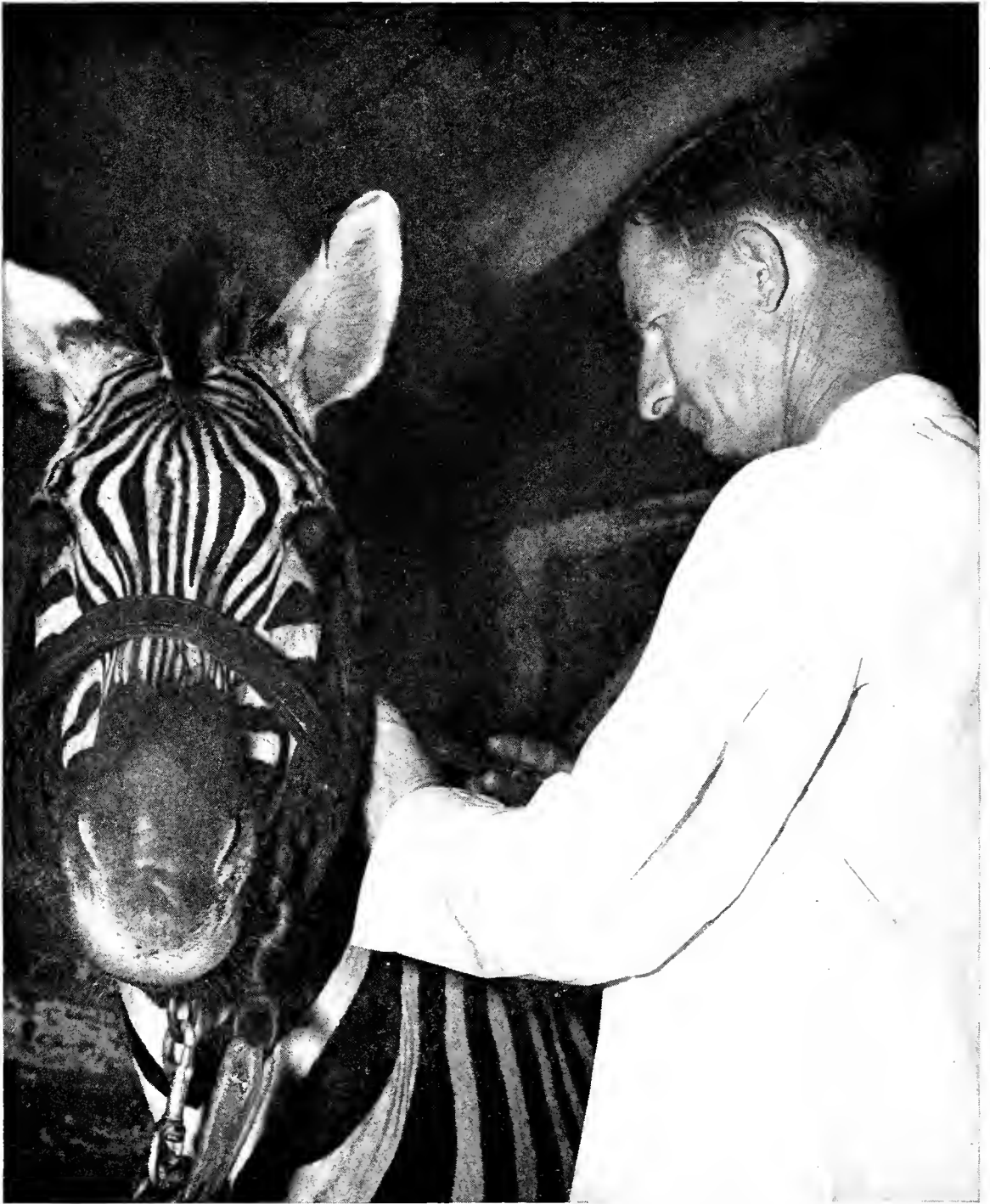




*Photo by Dick Miller*

*Painless Dentistry — But . . .*

The chimpanzee has his own way of remembering such episodes



*Photo by Dick Miller*

*Zebras Aren't Too Dangerous — If . . .*

The injection can be done painlessly

## CHAPTER XIX Never a Dull Moment

**T**HERE ARE certainly harder jobs than mine in the world and there are probably more hectic ones. Undoubtedly, there are those involving more difficult decisions. But I have never heard of a job less dull. Circus life itself is a routine in the midst of chaos. It is colored with pleasant associations, battles with the elements, races against time. To make an action-packed life even merrier, the unexpected is definitely the order of the day.

Some people come to see the circus as they go to the auto races, hoping that there will be an accident. When one does occur among the animals, it is usually a lulu.

One year, we had horses and buggies and floats lined up outside on the street and on the ramps of Madison Square Garden ready to go into the arena. What happened then has never been duplicated, before or since. One of the saddle horses, standing alone between two floats, lifted up her hind foot and stuck it in her mouth just above the hoof. There was a sudden scuffling and floundering and suddenly she went down. The harder she tugged, the more deeply imbedded her foot seemed to get.

We tried to stretch her jaws apart. We tried to pull her foot out but this seemed impossible to do without breaking it.

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We held the whole procession up while we roped her leg. By consistent strong pulling, we finally got her leg out without taking her teeth with it.

A screwball horse, you might say. Perhaps. Certainly, a screwball act. It gives you a start when it happens in the middle of a performance.

On another occasion in St. Louis, all the horses were lined up ready to go into the big top for the manège preceding the high-school horse number. One of the lead horses in a four-horse hitch had a collar that was a little large. The horse just in front of the driver moved too soon. That gave the lead horse's collar even more play. The lead horse stuck his head down with his mouth open and caught his jaw in his collar.

Luckily, this was the last buggy to go into the ring; but the others were already in and going around the arena. We were blocking the entrance so now they couldn't leave; they kept circling around and around the arena. The other entrance to the big top was opened finally, and the arena was emptied while six men held our horse and we performed an operation which consisted of sawing through the collar to remove it from his mouth.

There was another time when a four-horse team of black hackneys, hitched to a stagecoach, started trotting around the arena in Madison Square Garden. One of the lead horses somehow stepped over a trace. He tripped and fell. With this coach stopped, the four coaches following bunched up behind it, their horses rearing and restless. The two horses behind the fallen one on the stalled coach became upset and started kicking. They kicked the driver's seat out of the coach.

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We issued a call for all men. Probably sixty men rushed out onto the track. Some caught and held horses while others cut the reins. Within thirty seconds we had cut off all four horses from the stalled coach and were leading them and all the other teams quietly back to the basement.

I have never known a spectator to be hurt during one of these accidents, but we are always wary of any danger to the audience. Our men, and we have a lot of them, are trained to jump into action the instant there is a sign that anything is wrong. They hold excited animals and do whatever is necessary to straighten things out quickly.

There was a mishap with a black liberty horse we once had named Nightrider. In the middle of an act, he became excited somehow. He bolted the ring and went clear up to the top of the grandstand. When he got there, he turned around, surveyed the nine thousand spectators, and, apparently realizing that they had come to see him act and not escape, bolted down the steps again, miraculously escaping injury. Then he went back into the ring to continue his act.

Then there was the accident in Hollywood. In one recent season, we staged a special one-performance Hollywood Review as a benefit. The tickets were all sold at something like a hundred dollars apiece by the Hollywood stars. We gave our regular show except that each act had one or two famous Hollywood people in it.

Everything went smoothly until the manège number. Barry Fitzgerald was riding in one buggy. As he came into the arena, a group of autograph hounds rushed him and frightened the horse, who jumped and broke his rein. The buggy turned over. Barry Fitzgerald jumped free of it and the

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horse went on, dragging the overturned buggy around the arena. Luckily, this horse passed on the left so he did no damage as he dragged his overturned buggy into the clear area inside the arena.

He dragged his buggy around until Henry Ringling North dashed out to grab him. As soon as he had accomplished this, six or seven of the boys rushed in and held the horse while it was unhitched from the buggy. Then he was led smoothly out of the big top and within a matter of minutes was as calm as if nothing had happened.

The spectators didn't see this one, but a horse named Charley was responsible for trouble while pulling a float in a spectacle. He followed a float that had a lion in it. The procession stopped suddenly and Charley, not watching where he was going, took two or three extra steps and landed with his head up against the bars of the lion's cage.

Most members of the cat family will go far out of their way to attack a horse, horsemeat being one of their favorite foods. The minute Charley's head touched the bars, the lion's paw shot out from between them almost literally scalping that horse. His claws dug into Charley's head and a whole piece of skin was lifted up just like a cap.

I ran over and realized there was nothing I could do at the moment. Charley wasn't bleeding very badly, he wasn't in pain, and it seemed to me that his misfortune wouldn't be too obvious to the spectators. I smoothed down the scalped portion and held it in place with Charley's bridle. He continued around in the procession, uneventfully. I caught him at the exit, removed his bridle and sewed up his scalp.

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Then there have been other kinds of accidents. Early one morning in Chicago in 1942, before there were any spectators around, four lions got out of their cages. They romped around the menagerie, ran out into the lot, found several bales of hay and began playing among and on them like kittens.

When wild animals escape, almost invariably they are overcome with a feeling of insecurity and try to find something to crawl back into — in this case the straw, probably because it reminded them of the straw in the bottom of their cages, giving them a safe feeling. They played around in it until their cage boys and trainer cornered them one by one and backed them into portable cages.

A tiger got loose in New York one year. He romped around in the menagerie for a while, scaring the daylight out of a hundred spectators. But before anyone could do anything about him, he found the door to his cage still open and bounded back into it. Alfred Court, whose animal it was, knew that he was a good tiger and had already approached within a few feet of him before the animal turned around and went into his cage.

Once, between the matinee and the evening performance, the door was left open to a sun bear's cage. This "cute" but mean little animal got out. He romped around, and he injured every one of the twenty or so boys who tried to grab him. Finally one of the trainers, working with two sticks in his hands, rolled him backwards into a chute which is used for running the animals from one cage to another. This section of chute was then dragged up against his cage and he was transferred.

The funniest escape story, if any escape story can be funny,

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happened some years ago in Chicago. Our menagerie superintendent at that time liked to be well-groomed, and carried his own barber on the road with him.

Not only did the barber keep the superintendent well-groomed, but the superintendent sold the barber's services and they split the profits.

One morning this barber was working on a performer in one of the small tents while in another part of the grounds a performing lion had dashed through the open door of his cage.

While his customer's face was swathed in a hot towel, the barber looked up and saw the lion coming in the door. Whether for a shave or not, the barber didn't wait to find out. He turned and bolted out the back door.

Those who followed the lion into the tent, in an attempt to catch him, tell of seeing the customer stretched out in the chair, his face covered with the towel, discussing the latest baseball results in learned terms, apparently waiting for a lion to answer several carefully worded questions.

When no answer was forthcoming, the customer removed one end of the towel from his eye and raised his head slightly. . . . Customer, hot towel, and sheet — all in one motion — disappeared through the back door. The boys collared a gentle but bewildered lion.

Any job in the circus takes on the coloration of the whole. Even buying horses can be hazardous.

For the past few years, I have been in charge of purchasing all horses for the circus. Once a year, I make a trip to Kentucky or Tennessee, after notifying our dealers in those areas



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as to what we are looking for. They collect what they think are suitable horses for me to examine when I arrive.

It all used to be a headache. After I'd listened to the countless people who came by my wagon to tell me of the wonderful horses they had just up the road apiece, always at a bargain price, time and again it would turn out they had been wasting my time. Only once in a great while would there be a really good horse.

One incident finally ended that sort of practice. A man came by to ask me if I was in the market for anything. I told him we were looking for a black horse; I gave him the exact size, conformation, shade. Matching horses is one of the most difficult problems in the world and our horses must be matched.

"Yes," he said, "I have exactly the one you are looking for."

So, trustingly, I got into his car, which also contained a wife and nine children. Some two hours and thirty miles later, we drove up to his farm in the middle of Ohio. He proudly presented his horse.

The horse was old. I have never seen one as mangy. I have never seen a less black horse. This one was a pale brown. His teeth met at the angle of a couple of shovels. Although the farmer assured me that horse was no more than four years old, I knew that fifteen would be flattering the animal.

When I started to complain, my benefactor became extremely unpleasant and I was suddenly made to realize that I was thirty miles from the circus grounds with no possible way of getting back. All I could do was to change my tactics,

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point out all the good points of the horse and ask leave to go back to the grounds to get a final O.K. from my boss.

Then and there I decided never again, under any circumstances, to go out to look at any horse. If a man wants to bring him to the lot, I am always very happy to look at him. But I almost never buy. People mean well, but they can't have any idea of the kind of horse we are in the market for. We now buy almost all our horses through one of the recognized dealers with whom we have been working for years.

Just the other day an incident occurred that high-lighted the paradoxes inherent in my job.

I had spent the afternoon in my hospital performing a complicated operation on a cheetah named Cuba. This graceful animal, six weeks out of the jungles of India, had compound fractures of both hind legs. The bones at the elbows were broken off and jagged ends were piercing the flesh.

With specially ordered steel pins I had patched the bones together, sutured the cheetah and put her back in her cage.

I had been up most of the night before with one emergency after another and this cheetah operation, after a normally busy day, left me feeling very tired. But mixed with this feeling was one of satisfaction, for I knew the cheetah would get well.

As I drove out on the Tamiami Trail toward home I became conscious of a queer feeling in the pit of my stomach. I had a nagging sensation that I had forgotten something important. I went over and over all the events of the day and the process of the operation without being able to recollect what it was I had forgotten.

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As my car lumbered up the gravel driveway Martha came out across the lawn to meet me.

"I'll bet you forgot to stop for a loaf of bread," she said.

So it goes: a mixture of practical living and adventure story; and I have had a wonderful time ever since the day Henry Ringling North first took me around to introduce me to the circus. I think I have learned more about animals, animal medicine, and human beings than I ever could have learned anywhere else.

I have learned that the zebra is the animal I would least want to be attacked by. He is the one animal that cannot be defended against or fought off. When he bites his teeth remain closed and his jaws grind until there is nothing left of the thing he is biting. He is a wild, mean, powerful animal and is not just a horse with stripes.

I have learned how even wild animals will respond to the proper kind of treatment, and that amazing attachments are often formed between human beings and presumably savage animals. But I have learned how foolish people can be in the chances they take with these animals; and also how foolish animals can be, in the chances they take with humans.

I have learned how the greatest show on earth works, and how co-operative people can be, even a hodgepodge of people from all walks of life and from all countries in the world.

Although we carry one hundred and forty men whose sole job is to care for the animals, we seldom have any personnel problems and we practically never find an animal neglected.

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This, despite the rigors of circus life and the fact that it frequently attracts so-called drifters and ne'er-do-wells.

In these nine years I have not only formed very close friendships but also have received the same kind of sincere help from everybody up and down the line, from the greenest roustabout to the Norths themselves. It is this spirit, this "one for all and all for one" attitude, which alone explains how a complicated and gigantic organization can go on operating year after year — with seldom an accident, seldom a mishap, with humanitarian consideration for both humans and animals — and end up each year, after entertaining millions of people, with money in the bank.

There are times, of course, when I am tempted to settle down to a quiet private practice, where I would know from day to day what might possibly happen; but the excitement and the pleasures of the big top are more tempting than the day-to-day security of private practice. As for the future — well, as my mother always used to say when we kids were young, why waste today worrying about tomorrow? In the meantime, I rate myself not only one of the luckiest animal doctors in America, but also the world's Number 1 circus fan.





















